

CHRISTMAS & CHANUKAH 2025

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HANNUKAH THEN & NOW

Each year the Jewish community and many Christians celebrate Chanukah - the Feast of Dedication. Jesus also celebrated Chanukah every year. It was as He was celebrating this feast in Jerusalem that Jesus declared "I am the light of the world." (John 8.12)

Chanukah commemorates a miraculous event that took place about 160 years before the birth of the Messiah. The Syrian/Greek empire attempted to impose their pagan culture on Israel, to outlaw Jewish worship, the reading of the Bible and biblical faith. At first it seemed they were successful - desecrating the Temple by erecting a statue of the Greek god Zeus in the Holy of Holies and sacrificing a pig on the altar of incense. The Greeks, however, did not prevail because some brave Israelis (under the leadership of the Macabee family) withstood their effort to outlaw their biblical faith

defeating and removing the Greeks from the City and the Land. Two great miracles are recalled at Chanukah. The first was the defeat of a powerful empire by a small band of Israeli patriots. The second was that as they went to restore the Temple sacrifices though they had only a one-day supply of oil to light the Menorah it miraculously lasted eight days until the next supply of ritually prepared oil could be prepared. Israel's survival then and today is a great miracle that all believers should celebrate as Yeshua, Himself did.

Today in many nations (in the same spirit of the Greeks at the time of the first Chanukah) Biblical faith and the Judeo-Christian heritage is marginalized, and secular humanism marches on in triumph. The struggle which the Jews faced in 164 BC at the first Chanukah is relevant today.

THE COMING OF THE LORD- A JOY FOR ALL SEASONS

In the same month that Chanukah is celebrated, Christians also celebrate the birth of Messiah Yeshua. The coming of the Lord as man, pay the guilt of our sin and restore us to the blessing, care and purpose of God, Our Father, is the most wonderful event of history. God demonstrated His love for the world by son His only begotten Son to earth to reconcile us to Himself by His death and resurrection.

The reality behind Christmas is always worth celebrating. Pagans celebrate a winter festival, but we at this time celebrate the love of God our Father who has not left us to our own devices but sent His Son to bring us back to Himself.

In Jesus, God humbled himself to take on our humanity, as a baby, a child, a man and ultimately as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world, conquered death for all and (as the Bible tells us) is coming again to rule Israel and the nations. He took on human nature to make it possible for us to receive His divine nature. God has *"given us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1.4)

In Jesus we have not only a great prophet and teacher, but we have a mighty Redemer. Through Him the meaning of life is revealed and through Him we discover the unimaginable destiny that God has prepared for all who love Him. He is the center of history and is willing to become the center of our individual lives when we welcome Him in. The celebration of Christmas all over the world (despite all the noise and distraction) is a reminder to the whole world that God continues to invite all people to come to Him.

The angels who announced to His coming to the shepherds of Bethlehem gave a message for all time *"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace good will towards men!"*

In a world where ignoring God has become institutionalized, Christmas is a global reminder that God has not given up on us and His invitation to be reconciled to Him still stands.

As Christians we have a choice to conform to the pressure of the seemingly all powerful atheistic secular culture of today or to stand boldly in the faith and ways of the God of the Bible and **Jesus the Light of The World.**