

A Time for Rededication

“Blessed are you, Savior of Israel, who stopped the rush of the champion by the hand of your slave David, and delivered the camp of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and his armor-bearer. In like manner, shut up this camp in the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed of their army and their horsemen. Make them cowardly and melt the boldness of their strength, and let them tremble at their destruction. Strike them with the sword of those that love You, and let all who know Your name praise You with hymns.” (1 Maccabees 4:30)

Our world and our country needs ‘(Re)Dedication’ to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Today as we look into the history and celebration of *Hanukah*, our days are, in many ways, similar to the times of these events. Our country has abandoned its Christian roots and our national sacred covenants with the Almighty and has in the last 50+ years become a godless nation. As we advance in history, we also retreat in history and time (*Eccl. 3:14-15*). The times before the return of our Messiah and the accompanying **birth pangs** are best understood by the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (‘**God Manifest**’) – the times of *Hanukah*.

When *Judah Maccabee* his family and the loyal Torah-keeping Jews of the 160’s BCE fought against the Greeks, they fought more than a war for land. They fought for their freedom to be the people God had chosen them to be, i.e., they fought for their religious freedom! *Antiochus Epiphanes* had ordered pigs to be sacrificed in Jerusalem’s Temple – they were to be cooked, the meat fed to the priests, and the juice poured on the altar. It is not hard to imagine the mess and the stench that must have been in the altar of God where no unclean animals had ever been sacrificed. The sanctuary of *Elohim* had been desecrated, desolated, and ruined... Eventually God gave the victory, and the Jews recovered the Temple site.

“And Judah said, ‘Now that our enemies are crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it.’ And the whole army gathered together, and they went up to Mount Zion. And they found the sanctuary desolated and the altar polluted...and they tore open their clothes and uttered great lamentation and covered themselves with ashes, and fell on their faces to the ground, and when the ceremonial shofarim sounded they cried to heaven...And on the 25th of the ninth month, Kislev, they rose at dawn and offered a lawful sacrifice on the new altar of holocausts which they had made. The altar was dedicated, to the sound of zithers, harps and cymbals, at the same time of the year and on the same day on which the pagans had originally profaned it. The whole people fell prostrate in adoration, praising to the skies Him who had made them so successful. For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering holocausts, community sacrifices and thanksgiving. They ornamented the front of the Temple with crowns and bosses of gold, repaired the gates and the storerooms and fitted them with doors. There was no end to the rejoicing among the people, and the reproach of the pagans was lifted from them. Judah, with his brothers and the whole assembly of Israel made it a law that the days of the dedication of the altar should be celebrated yearly at the proper season, for eight days beginning on the 25th of Kislev, with rejoicing and gladness” (1 Maccabees 4:36-40, 52-59)

Were the Greeks the real enemies? Historians suggest that the Greek-Syrians, though they were certainly the Children of Israel’s foreign enemy, were not their greatest enemy. Instead, they suggest that *the villains of the story of Hanukah were the Jewish Hellenizers* – a group of Jewish aristocrats who wished to form a Greek-polis, a Greek state. When segments of the people loyal to the *Torah* opposed these **Hellenizers**, they called upon their powerful supporter, *Antiochus Epiphanes*, to back them with Syrian troops. According to this view the real enemies were fellow Jews who sought assimilation in the form of **Hellenization** – thus, **assimilation** has always been the No. 1 enemy of the people of Israel. **Assimilation** into the world system (or perhaps the satanic system) has also been the number 1 enemy of the body of believers. This is exactly the place where America is currently.

Haven’t we affirmed that we must *Do What Yeshua Would Do (WWJD)*? Let us consider the narrative and context given at end of the 10th chapter of John when *Yeshua* – the chapter that contains the **Parable of the Good Shepherd**.

“²²Then came Hanukkah (Hebrew, literally rededication); it was winter in Jerusalem. ²³Yeshua was walking in the Temple around Solomon’s Colonnade. ²⁴Then the Judean leaders surrounded Him, saying, “How long will You hold us

in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us outright!”²⁵ Yeshua answered them, “I told you, but you don’t believe! The works I do in My Father’s name testify concerning Me.²⁶ But you don’t believe, because you are not My sheep.²⁷ My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me.²⁸ I give them eternal life! They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.³⁰ I and the Father are one.”³¹ Again the Judean leaders picked up stones to stone Him.³² Yeshua answered them, “I’ve shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone Me?”³³ The Judean leaders answered, “We aren’t stoning you for a good work, but for blasphemy. Though You are a man, You make Yourself God!”³⁴ Yeshua answered them, “Isn’t it written in your Writings (Ps. 82:6), ‘I have said you are gods’?³⁵ If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),³⁶ do you say of Him, the One the Father set apart and sent into the world, ‘You speak blasphemy,’ because I said, ‘I am Ben-Elohim’?³⁷ “If I don’t do the works of My Father, don’t believe Me!³⁸ But if I do, even if you don’t trust Me, trust the deeds. Then you may come to know and continue to understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father.”³⁹ Therefore they tried to capture Him again, but He escaped from their hand.” (John 10:22-39)

Here we see that when *Yeshua* affirmed his divinity (I and the Father are one {*echad*}), he did so after first reminding the audience of the fact that *“²⁷My sheep hear (shema) My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸I give them eternal life!”* The famous and important **Parable of the Good Shepherd** was given during the time of **Hanukah!** Being sheep that hear His voice (those that make themselves recognizable by and follow the Lord) are the kind of sheep He is looking for in this Feast of *Hanukah*. Consider His words: *“⁸ All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate! If anyone comes in through Me, he will be saved. He will come and go and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly! ¹¹ “I am the Good Shepherd The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² The hired worker is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his down. He sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees. Then the wolf snatches and scatters the sheep. ¹³ The man is only a hired hand and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ “I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not from this fold; those also I must lead, and they will listen to My voice. So there shall be one flock, one Shepherd. ¹⁷ “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, so that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father” (John 10:8-18)*

It is obvious then that the timing of this *Hanukah* (which coincides with the great battle we are facing to refocus our nation back to the Almighty) is divinely choreographed. Movement has begun in the battle to reverse the media reported 2020 election results and against incredible odds we are beginning to see breakthroughs. Our fight is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our fight is not pro Republican and against Democrats but rather our battle is for Biblical Righteousness and the restoration of America back to its godly roots. Our battle is against any platform that is intent in continuing the holocaust of the unborn and affirms Roe V Wade; against the anti-Biblical redefinition of marriage as a holy union between a man and a woman; against any attempts to redefine gender away from the design of the creator as “man and woman made He them”; against any form of fraud in the election process; against any judicial attempts to bypass and redefine the US Constitution; against the return of prayer and moral lifestyle in life, schools, governments and media; against those that oppose “Freedom of Religion”; and against those that favor one world rule and government and want to enforce the genocide of older people in order to implement population control. We are a sovereign nation and must oppose Chinese, Russian, and Iran’s efforts to influence and destroy America. We are not socialist or communist or Marxist, and instead we are *one nation under God, indivisible and with justice for all*. If the country is to turn around, return to God and rededicate their ways to God, shouldn’t we also as individuals and congregation lead the way in rededication? I invite you to come to the altar and let us rededicate our lives back the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and reaffirm that in our lives we have no king but *Yeshua* and no sovereign except *Adonai*. Happy *Hanukah* and *Shabbat Shalom!*