

MEMO

TO: Bible Study Members

FROM: Ole Anthony

SUBJECT: Feast of Hanukkah

The mood in Israel just prior to the feast of Hanukkah almost 2,000 years ago was one of anticipation of deliverance and restoration all connected to the hope of Messiah. There was a feeling in the air that something momentous was about to happen. All law, prophecies and holy service in all religions pointed towards this one seed of woman, desired of the nations, that was about to be revealed in Mary on the feast of Hanukkah.

The people were looking for that singular light shining in the dark place until the day would dawn and the day star would arise in their hearts.

For those that would become disciples some thirty years later, this hope gave meaning to their worship, filled them with patience in their sufferings, kept them separate from the heathen world around them and made them know they were strangers in a strange land. In yet a little while and He that would come, would come and not tarry--then all the blessing and joy would be theirs.

This is what the feast of Hanukkah or Dedication has always meant to those that had ears to hear. At any moment for each sincere believer, the tidings that have been finished from the foundation of the world may burst upon their minds that He is come...that the work is finished...that their warfare is over.

It was this hope that led the three Magi to travel half way across the known world to pay homage nine months later.

Following is some important information about Hanukkah:

- 1) The 25th day of the month Kislew commences the days of Hanukkah.
- 2) The feast lasts eight days on which lamentation and fasting are forbidden.
- 3) When the Greeks (actually Syria but part of Selucid kingdom) entered the temple, they defiled all the oils therein.
- 4) When the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which had the seal of the High Priest, hence untouched and undefiled. It contained sufficient oil for only one day's lighting. It took eight days to bring sanctified oil from Thekoah, where the High Priest was in hiding.
- 5) A miracle was wrought therein, and the lamp stayed lit for the full eight days.

- 6) The following year these days were appointed a festival with the recital of the Hallel (Ps. 113-118), thanksgiving, lightings and palm branches.
- 7) The original miracle took place in 165 B.C. Exactly three years before, on the same day, Antiochus Epiphanes had a pagan altar erected in the Temple upon which swine sacrifices were made (I Macc. 1:41-64.)
- 8) Judas Maccabeus chose the date and the feast was celebrated by illuminations similar to the Feast of Tabernacles (I Macc. 4:36; II Macc. 10:6.)
- 9) Lightings were similar to the Feast of Tabernacles, in that the outer Temple was lit and the breeches and girdles of the priests were used to light the fire.
- 10) On the first day of Hanukkah, one candle is lit and thereafter progressively increased until on the eighth day eight candles are lit.
- 11) It is forbidden to use the Hanukkah lamp or the light from the lamps for anything. You cannot read by them or count money by them. It is even forbidden to light other candles by the Hanukkah light.
- 12) Olive oil is used in the lamps, and only women can light the lamp each night.
- 13) The blessing for Hanukkah is as follows:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us by His Torah and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah.
- 14) The theme of the festival is "A great miracle happened here." In Hebrew it reads, "Nes gadol haya sham." The initial letters of this sentence in Hebrew are the four characters engraved on the sides of the dreidel (spinning top.) The dreidel is used in many children's games during the feast.
- 15) The Mitzvah, or commandment, is to gaze on the light and consider the great miracle that has happened here, i.e. the Son of God has been born in you.
- 16) While the Hanukkah lamps are lit, the women rest from all work.

SCHEDULE OF HANUKKAH

2:00 PM SUNDAY

MEET BY SEDER GROUPS FOR HANUKKAH READINGS:

Torah - Numbers 7:1 - 8:4

Haftarah - Zechariah 2:10 - 4:7; Isaiah 7:13 - 8:22; Isaiah 29

Writings - Psalm 30

New Testament - Luke 1:26-56

Extra Biblical readings:

Book of Enoch, Chapter 57

Sibylline Oracles

Psalter of Solomon 18:23-31

Jubilees, chapter 1

Judith

I Macc 1:41-64 & 4:36

II Macc 10:6

4th Book of Esdras

4:00 PM SUNDAY

SEDER MEAL

5:30 PM SUNDAY

MEET IN BIG GROUP FOR:

- 1) Hanukkah Songs
- 2) Afikomen
- 3) Hallel (Ps. 113-118)