

Hanukkah - The Feast of Dedication

Many of those who are coming out of the church, and no longer celebrate "man's holidays" are wondering if they should celebrate Hanukkah. After all, it's not one of those "biblical holidays" and is often seen as nothing more than the Jewish version of Christmas (at least, in the gift-giving aspect.) Our Savior Himself celebrated this holiday, as we shall soon see, so we, who are trying to follow Him and do as He did, should celebrate this as well, don't you agree? Not only that, but if we have been grafted-in to the lineage of Abraham, this is **our** history too.

As we take a closer look at the story of Hanukkah, we will discover lessons that can be quite valuable to us. Daniel originally foretold Hanukkah, but like many prophecies, this also has a future fulfillment. It gives us a foreshadowing of what is to come in the Last Days. In the story of Hanukkah we find an anti-messiah type who will give us a clearer picture of what the Anti-Messiah will look like. In fact, some claim that keeping Hanukkah "will change the way we think of Messiah, Torah, and the Last Days."

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Yeshua was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. **John 10:22-23** Yeshua did not spend His time hanging around Jerusalem. In fact, the only times we see Him there, at the temple, is during one of the major pilgrimage feasts. The fact that we find Him here, during the winter, when there are none of these feasts, should make us sit up and take notice. This "Feast of Dedication" that Yeshua was attending is obviously the holiday we know as Hanukkah, which is the Hebrew word for "dedication."

Let's begin the study of Hanukkah with a little bit of background. Hellenism, the principles and ideals associated with classical Greek civilization, have taken over the known world, thanks to Alexander the Great. After his death, his kingdom (empire) was divided between his four generals. Daniel foretold all of this:

"And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his *own* descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and *given* to others besides them." Daniel 11: 3-4

Alexander allowed the Jewish people to continue worshipping God at the Temple deciding that this would endear the people to him. After the death of Alexander a man called Ptolemy ended up with Judea, after many wars between he and the other generals, he came into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day and found no resistance... naturally as the Jews were observing the Sabbath! It was Ptolemy who ordered the translating of the Torah into the Greek language. Antiochus, the grandson of Seleucus, the general who had inherited Asia from Alexander, took Judea from Ptolemy. Antiochus is our anti-messiah type.

Antiochus had given himself the title "the divine" but most of his people referred to him as "the mad-man." At first he was very kind to the Jewish people, allowing them to continue running the city of Jerusalem and most importantly the Temple, as they saw fit. In fact, he made the following law (according to Josephus):

"It shall be lawful for no foreigner to come within the limits of the temple round about; which thing is forbidden also to the Jews, unless to those who, according to their own custom, have purified themselves. Nor let any flesh of horses, or of mules, or of asses, be brought into the city, whether they be wild or tame; nor that of leopards, or foxes, or hares; and, in general, that of any animal which is forbidden for the Jews to eat. Nor let their skins be brought into it; nor let any such animal be bred up in the city. Let them only be permitted to use the sacrifices derived from their forefathers, with which they have been obliged to make acceptable atonements to God. And he that transgresseth any of these orders, let him pay to the priests three thousand drachmae of silver."

Soon after all of this, there was a change in the position of High Priest. The High Priest (Onias) died, but his son (also named Onias) was too young to take the position, so it was given to his brother instead. This man (the English translators call him Jesus, so obviously his name was Yeshua) took the Greek name of Jason and actually wanted permission to build a gymnasium across from the Temple, as he was in love with the Greek culture. This gives us an idea of how much the Greek culture had infiltrated the Jewish culture.

Two years after taking Jerusalem, Antiochus returned to Jerusalem under the pretence of peace and sacked the Temple, removing all of the gold and precious things from the Temple of the Lord, including the Menorah and

the other furnishings and secret treasures that had been dedicated to Adonai. He then forbade the Jews to offer up the daily sacrifices and murdered many people in the city. Then he dedicated the Temple to the Greek god Zeus, setting up a statue of Zeus (which, according to tradition, had Antiochus' face) and then he sacrificed a swine to Zeus. Daniel foretold these events.

"In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small *force of people*. In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest *parts* of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time.

Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action and *then* return to his *own* land. At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the **abomination of desolation**. Daniel 11: 21-24, 28-31

The despicable person who arose is Antiochus, who was not a king, but yet he had the power of a king. He made an alliance with the Jews, allowing them to continue worshipping Adonai as they always had. He then came back and took the city with a small group of men (easily, as the Jews were honoring Sabbath that day!) He then entered the richest part of the realm (the Temple), which no one before him dared to do, taking the Temple treasures and returning home with his plunder. He even killed the Levites who dared to stand up against him as he plundered the Temple. Worst of all, he then returns and, after ending the daily sacrifice (and all other sacrifices

specified by Adonai) he completed the desecration by erecting a statue within the Temple of the Greek god Zeus, which truly is an abomination in Adonai's sight! This action, along with the sacrificing of an unclean animal (pig) on the altar of God, makes the Temple unclean. This is the abomination that brings desolation.

Daniel goes on to tell us even more horrors about this man:

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. Daniel 11:36-39

Now, keep these things in mind as we read from the First book of the Maccabees and see what Antiochus does next.

Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should **be one people**, and every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to **his religion**, and **sacrificed unto idols**, and **profaned the Sabbath**. For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that they should follow the strange laws of the land, and **forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple**; and that they should **profane the Sabbaths and festival days**: and pollute the sanctuary and holy people: **set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts**: that they should also **leave their children uncircumcised**, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: to the end they might **forget the law, and change all the ordinances**. And **whosoever would not** do according to the

commandment of the king, he said, **he should die.** 1 Maccabees 1:41-50

This is exactly what we will see in the Last Days. The man of Torah-less-ness (the word law is the Hebrew word Torah) will be revealed and he will call the whole world to be as one people. Paul warns us in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, about this man who declares himself to be god, just as Antiochus did. Each of these laws will be enacted in the Last Days as the Anti-Messiah will hunt down those who are worshipping El Shaddai in spirit and in truth. Antiochus ordered that any woman found to have circumcised her son would be killed and her child would be hung from her neck as a sign to the rest of the Jews. This also gives us an idea of the kind of horrors we will see in the coming days.

Every good story has heroes, and the story of Hanukkah is no exception. Daniel also tells us about them:

"By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days." Daniel 11:32-33

Thanks to the books of the Maccabees, we know the names of these heroes. "In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin." 1 Maccabees 2:1 Mattathias, a priest, could not stand to witness what was going on in his land, the land of God, and cried out to God:

He said, Woe is me! Wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people, and of the holy city, and to dwell there, when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy, and the sanctuary into the hand of strangers? Her temple is become as a man without glory. Her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in the streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy. What nation hath not had a part in her kingdom and gotten of her spoils? All her ornaments are taken away; of a free woman she is become a bondslave. And, behold, our sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory, is laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned it. 1 Maccabees 2:7-12

Mattathias and his sons (he had five of them) grieved and tore their clothes and wore sackcloth. Unfortunately, it didn't take long for the king's

men to come to Mattathias' town of Modin and set up an altar. They approached Mattathias, as a leader of the town, and told him to sacrifice a swine on the altar. Mattathias refused. Another man approached the altar, willing to do this act of sacrifice to please the king. I'm sure you can imagine what Mattathias did!

Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment: wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar. Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and the altar he pulled down. Thus dealt he zealously for the law of God like as Phinees did unto Zambri the son of Salom. And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, "Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me." So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city. Then many that sought after justice and judgment went down into the wilderness, to dwell there: Both they, and their children, and their wives; and their cattle; because afflictions increased sore upon them. 1 Maccabees 2:24-30

These are the heroes of Hanukkah: the men who stood up against the king and for Adonai. They were zealous for Torah (God's laws and teachings) and kept the covenant of God. It was not just Mattathias that they followed, but it was his zeal they followed. In fact, Mattathias didn't lead them for long, as he was an old man and soon died. His son Judah, known as "the hammer" led the rebellion against Antiochus and his army, which is where we get the name Maccabees, as it is Hebrew for "hammer." Judah was a great leader, not because of his military skills, but because of his great faith in HaShem. When his people saw the much larger army of the Greeks and were very afraid, he displayed his great faith.

Who, when they saw the host coming to meet them, said unto Judas, "How shall we be able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude and so strong, seeing we are ready to faint with fasting all this day?" Unto whom Judas answered, "It is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and with the God of heaven it is all one, to deliver with a great multitude, or a small company: for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength cometh

from heaven. They come against us in much pride and iniquity to destroy us, and our wives and children, and to spoil us: but we fight for our lives and our laws. Wherefore the Lord himself will overthrow them before our face: and as for you, be ye not afraid of them. 1 Maccabees 3:17-22

These brave men, our ancestors, fought against the mighty Greek army and drove them from Jerusalem and all of Judea. Before the fighting ended, they took it upon themselves to begin the cleansing of the Temple (remember, these were priests... Levites!) As many do not have a copy of the 1 book of Maccabees, I will post the results below so that you may read for yourself what happened.

Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary. Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into mount Sion. And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down; They rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads, And fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven.

Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place. And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them.

Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. And upon the altar

they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make.

Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals. Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success. And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. 1 Maccabees 4:36-56

According to Torah, it takes seven days to dedicate the altar, having it dedicated on the eighth day. The stones from the old altar, which they set aside in the hopes that some future prophet would come and tell them what to do with them, still were piled on the Temple Mount in Yeshua's day. In fact, they still played their part in Hanukkah of Yeshua's day. Remember, we showed how He kept the Feast of Dedication? Well, lets look at the verses in John that immediately follow them.

The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Yeshua answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 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. I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. John 10:24-31

These men were standing in the portico of Solomon, within the Temple grounds. Where were they finding stones to use to stone Yeshua? The

stones they were picking up were the very stones that had been removed from the defiled altar and put aside awaiting a prophet's instructions. These altar stones were the very stones they were going to use to stone the Son of God!!

Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness. 1 Maccabees 4:59

The month of Casleu is now known as Kislev, and falls in the early winter season. We now know the story of Hanukkah, how the festival originated and who the heroes were. We have also begun to look at how Daniel had foretold us all about this event... but we have not looked fully at what Daniel had to say.

In the second chapter of Daniel we read of a dream that has troubled King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel tells him the dream, of a large statue of a man, and then tells him the interpretation of the dream. As many of us are aware, the interpretation stated that the head of the statue (made of gold) was the Babylonian Empire, the chest and arms (made of silver) represented the Persian Empire (which soon overtook the Babylonian Empire), the belly and thighs (made of bronze) represented the Greek Empire, and the legs (made of iron) were the Roman Empire. The feet of the statue were made of iron mixed with clay; this also was part of the Roman Empire and represented 10 kings. Interestingly enough, from the first "king" of Rome who took over Judea (Augustus) to the one who led Rome in 70 CE (Titus) when the Temple was eventually destroyed, there were 10 kings! We are then told of a rock that is cut out of a mountain without hands and this rock crushed the statue and grew to cover the whole world. This Rock is obviously Yeshua and His kingdom would cover all the earth.

Again, in Daniel chapter seven, we see a dream given to Daniel. This dream occurred during the reign of Belshazzar, and gave him a vision of what is to come. In this vision Daniel sees four beasts, each one representing the same four kingdoms. The last beast had iron teeth and trampled down the other beasts. This beast had 10 horns (the same as the 10 toes) and then a little horn came up among them with a mouth that uttered great boasts. We will discuss this other horn later.

In the next chapter we read of another vision of Daniel, this time a ram with two horns, the second one coming up last and grew longer than the other. This ram was the Medo-Persian Empire, the Medes being weaker than the Persians, and the Persians going farther with more power than the Medes. Along comes another animal, this time a goat, with one horn, that comes from the west and covers the whole earth without even stepping his foot down. After defeating the ram, which had no power to withstand the goat, the single horn is replaced by four smaller horns. It is easy to see that this goat is the Greeks, the horn of Alexander leading the way. Remember, soon after his victories he dies and is replaced by four generals... the four horns that replace the one.

Out of one of these horns comes a smaller horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the "beautiful land," obviously referring to the Promise Land. This sounds very much like Antiochus, does it not? In fact, Daniel 8:11 says, "It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down." I'd say that little horn sounds a lot like Antiochus.

We then come to the verse where Daniel asks "how long" and is given the answer, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored." (Verse 14.) Many folks have given their interpretation of this verse and I have to admit that one particular interpretation made a lot of sense to me. This is not 2,300 days (as many claim) but 2,300 sacrifices, made morning and evening, before the temple would be restored. That would be 1,150 days, which is roughly three years and two months. This is the same amount of time the altar was shut down and desecrated, before the Maccabees restored the Temple and rebuilt the altar.

Anyone who has done any study into eschatology, or the study of the Last Days, knows that we have always looked at Daniel as containing prophecies concerning the end times. In fact, we find this said in Daniel: "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future." (Dan 10:14) How can this be when we have just seen that these events have already been played out?

Let's go back to what Yeshua said to His disciples:

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet,

standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (Mat 24:15)

"Let the reader understand..." What did these words mean? Why would Yeshua mention this if it has already happened? The answer is simple, it will happen again. Let's go back to Daniel chapter seven and look at that "little horn" again.

"While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*. I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took *His seat*; His vesture *was* like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, its wheels *were* a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire."
(Dan 7:8-11)

Any reader of Revelation will see that this is plainly referring to the beast... the Anti-Messiah. We all know that he will be judged and cast into the lake of fire. So, the little horn, which is the Anti-Messiah, will come from the last beast... the one with iron teeth that trampled down every other beast before it. As stated earlier, this beast represents the Roman Empire. "The Roman Empire fell long ago," you might say. Did it? Did it really fall? Or did it just change shape? One could easily say that it evolved into the Holy Catholic Church, as its seat is in Rome and it still contains an Emperor (the Pope.) Or, one could look at the democracies of the world and point out the obvious fact that these all are based on the very same type of political ideals as were found in the Roman Empire. Another interesting facet is the European Union, which is the coming together of the countries of Europe... the very same countries that at one time made up the Roman Empire. Either way you look at it, the Empire still exists today.

So, this "little horn," this "Anti-Messiah," will speak boastfully against the Most High God. We have also learned, from our study of Antiochus, that this "little horn" will have laws that stop the observance of Torah (shutting

down the altar, profaning the Sabbath, etc.) We are warned ahead of time about these things so that we can stay away from them, and so that when we see them come to pass before our very eyes, our faith will be strengthened. This is the warning that Paul gives to the Corinthians in his second letter to them.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; and I will welcome you." (2Co 6:14-17)

The word translated in the verses above as "lawlessness" is the Greek word "anomia" which means "violation of law." "Belial" is a word of Hebrew origin, which means "worthlessness" and is also an epithet of Satan. Paul is asking us what Mattathias asked the Jewish people of his day, "how can you align yourself up with them and against the God of Israel?" Hellenism, just at the "one world view" of today, is totally against the ways of El Shaddai. If we join together with them, and follow the "ways of the world," how can we be the pure temple of God that He has called us to be? We cannot! Therefore, we must separate ourselves from them, coming out from among them, and stand up for the Torah, the laws and teachings of God.

For the spirit of anti-messiah has been around for quite some time. John also told us this:

And every spirit that does not confess Yeshua is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1Jo 4:3)

This spirit, which denies Yeshua is from God, has been in the world for a long time now. This spirit is growing and advancing, just as Hellenism grew and advanced at the time of the Maccabees, and is preparing the way for the Anti-Messiah to emerge and be embraced by the whole world, just as Antiochus, and his teachings, were embraced by the "whole world."

We need to learn to stand up against this "world vision" just as Judah the Maccabee stood up. We need to join the "Hanukkah Revolution!" We need

to be just as zealous for Torah as the Maccabee were. We need to join with others who are willing to stand up and say, "Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintains the covenant, let him follow me!" just as Mattathias did. We need to be zealous for Torah and maintain the covenant. This is what we were created to do.

Let us keep in mind that we are not talking of "keeping the law to be saved." No one is saved through any other means than the grace of God, freely given, so no one can boast, "I did it myself." We keep the law **because** we are saved! When we keep the commandments, the truth (the Torah) is in us!

This is the true gospel... we can repent of our lawlessness (torah-lessness) and be forgiven by the blood of the Lamb of God (Yeshua - salvation) and be free to walk in His commands (Torah) simply because we love Him. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:15)

Yeshua plainly shows us (in Matthew 24) that the re-gathering of His elect will not occur until after the tribulation, and that there will be many who overcome. We are told to stand firm to resist the devil (Ephesians 6:11) holding on to the traditions we were taught (2 Thessalonians 2:15.) The traditions that the disciples taught were these: obey the commands (Torah) and hold to the teachings of Yeshua.

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (Revelation 12:11)

They overcame the beast by the blood of the Lamb. These saints had joined the Hanukkah Revolution! To be included among those who overcome, we will need, in that day, to have the same faith that we see in Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego when faced with death in the furnace. This is a perfect example of those who loved their God more than their own lives.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18)

We also need to remember that it was in the fiery furnace that these men met Yeshua, face to face, and learned what the word salvation really

meant. We too will meet Him face to face when we are faced with our own fiery furnace test. May our faith be like theirs when that day comes!

Anomia, the condition of being without the law, comes from ignorance of Torah. "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**'" (Matthew 7:23) Do we want to hear Yeshua say this to us? Lawlessness = anomia = being without the teachings of Adonai. We need to have Torah!

I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. (Romans 6:19)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to **deny ungodliness and worldly desires** and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every **lawless deed**, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds**. (Titus 2:11-14)

If lawless deeds were defined as those outside of Torah, and we are to be zealous for good deeds, where would we find these good deeds? They would be the deeds found in Torah, of course! Plainly we are being told here to be zealous for Torah, just as the Maccabees were. We need to join the Hanukkah Revolution!

John simply says this: **Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.** (1 John 3:4) Once again, the word here is anomia - to be without Torah. This is what Yeshua came to free us from, being without Torah. We are all included in the family of Abraham, we have all crossed over, and now we need to learn Torah so that we can be freed from the bondage of sin.

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:24) Adonai sends these false prophets to test us. He wants to see if our hearts are truly for Him, to see if we truly love El Shaddai and to see if we have a love for the truth in our hearts.

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes

true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; **and you shall keep His commandments**, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him." (Deuteronomy 13:1-4)

Torah tells us how a truth is established: "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. (Deuteronomy 17:6) We have already seen the witness of Moses concerning false signs and wonders (Deuteronomy 13) and he is witness number one. We have also seen as a second witness what Yeshua teaches concerning these things (Matthew 24). Have we a third witness? Let's see what does Paul has to say:

Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the **apostasy comes first**, and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the **mystery of lawlessness is already at work**; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

Then that **lawless one** will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10)

Throughout the scripture, the little horn, or the beast, or the Anti-Messiah, is described as one who is "without Torah" or even the one who teaches against Torah. If we are to stand firm and overcome *in that day* we must learn to do so now! We must join the Hanukkah Revolution and be zealous for Torah now. We can no longer make the small concessions that we have made in the past but must learn to stand up for truth. Think of it this

way, if we can't stand up to "Aunt Sally" and tell her why we can't eat her salad, which is loaded with bacon, and God tells us not to eat that, then what are we going to do when the consequences are greater? If we can't stand up for the truth now, what makes us think that we will be able to say, "even if my God doesn't save me from your hand, I will NOT bow to you!" when the time of our testing comes?

The story of Hanukkah is all about standing up and doing what is right in the face of the world who wants us to compromise our faith and be like them. Even the dreidel, which appears to be nothing more than a child's game, teaches us this lesson. When the Jews were forbidden to teach the Torah to their children, in direct opposition to what God says, they taught them anyway. When the authorities came into their homes to arrest them, what they found was a family playing a game with a little top. But what they were really doing was teaching their children about the great miracle that happened back in Israel, when a small band of zealous priests stood up for Torah and defeated the great Greek army!

So, let us keep the Feast of Dedication and teach the lessons of Hanukkah to the next generation. Each night, as we light the candles of the Hanukkah menorah, let us boldly display them in our window for the world to see, and proclaim to them that we too are zealous for Torah. For each time we do this, we increase our faith and pass the test that God sends to see whether or not our heart is truly for Him. We do this now, standing up for the truth and for Torah, so that we are prepared to do this then, in the Last Days, when our very survival depends on it. Let us draw together, just as the Maccabees did so long ago, so that we can stand together against the adversary who longs to devour us, and be among those who overcome. For to them that overcome will be granted to eat from the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God, will not be hurt by the second death, will be given the hidden manna and a new name, be given garments of white and will have his name found in the Lamb's book of life. What could be sweeter than that?