

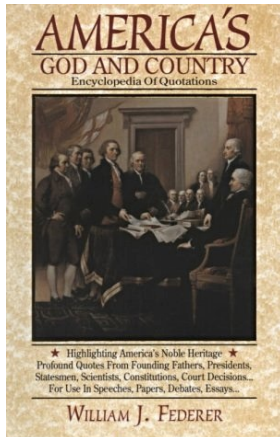
American Minute with Bill Federer Hanukkah: Festival of Lights, Rededication of the Second Temple c.164 BC

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The origin of **lights** at this season can be traced back to the **Jewish Festival of Lights**, or **Feast of the Dedication**, in Hebrew called "**Hanukkah**" ... *[continue reading ...](#)*



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Solomon's week-long **dedication** of the **First Temple** began on the 1st day of the Hebrew month Tishri, in the 10th century BC, ending on the 8th day of Tishrei (I Kings 8; II Chronicles 7).



The **Babylonians** destroyed the **First Temple** on the

9th day of the month of Av, c. 587 BC.

Jews were taken away and held captive in **Babylon**, 597-581 BC.

The prophet **Jeremiah** wrote in chapter 25:

"And it shall come to pass, when **seventy years** are accomplished, that I will punish the **king of Babylon**, and that nation, saith the Lord."

And **Jeremiah** wrote in chapter 29:

"For thus saith the Lord, That after **seventy years** be accomplished at **Babylon** I will visit you, and **perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.**"

The prophet **Daniel** read **Jeremiah's prophecy** and wrote in chapter 9:

"In the first year of his reign I **Daniel** understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to **Jeremiah the prophet**, that **he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**"

In 539 B.C., **Cyrus of Persia** captured **Babylon**, the ancient world's largest city.

Shortly after, **Cyrus** let **Jews return to Jerusalem** after 70 years of captivity.

The Book of Ezra, chapter 6, recorded how **Jews built the Second Temple** and dedicated it circa 516 B.C.

Around 334 BC,
Alexander the Great invaded
from the west and

speedily
conquered the
Medo-Persian
Empire.



The prophet
Daniel foretold in
chapter 8:

"The male goat
was coming from
the west over the
surface of the
whole earth
without touching
the ground; and
the goat had a
conspicuous horn
between his eyes.



He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I
had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at
him in his mighty wrath ... and he struck the ram and
shattered his two horns."

At the height of
his power,
Alexander the
Great suddenly
died and his four
generals **divided**
up his empire.



Daniel had
foretold:

"The male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up **four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.**"

The common understanding is that **Alexander's Empire**, after numerous "**Diadochi**" battles, was divided up thus:



- **Lysimachus** ruled Thrace & Asia Minor;
- **Cassander** ruled Macedonia and Greece;
- **Ptolemy** ruled Egypt and into the Middle East;
- **Seleucus** ruled the rest of the Middle East, Syria, Babylon, Persia, and parts of India, collectively known as the "Seleucid Empire."

Around 167 BC, out of the **Seleucid Empire**, there arose an aggressive king, **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**.



Daniel wrote further:

"Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land."

Best-selling author **Joel Richardson**

presents the thought, that with modern-day Iran threatening Israel, there may yet be **a future element to Daniel's prophecy**: "Son of man, understand that **the vision pertains to the time of the end.**"



Antiochus attacked **Jerusalem**, as reported in **2nd Book of Maccabees 5:11-14**:

"The king ... thought that Judea was in revolt. Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm.

He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses.

... There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants ...

In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery."

The prophet **Daniel** foretold in chapter 11:22-27:

"While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant ... and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage ...



And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."

Antiochus IV Epiphanes tried to force the Jews to **abandon their beliefs** and adopt the **Greek culture**, as recorded in 2 Maccabees 5:11-14:

"Not long after this the king sent an Athenian senator to force the Jews to abandon the customs of their ancestors and live no longer by the laws of God;

also to **profane the temple** in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus ...

They also brought into the temple things that were forbidden, so that the altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the laws ...

A man could not keep the sabbath or celebrate the traditional feasts, nor even admit that he was a Jew ...

... Women ... arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall ...

Others, who had assembled in nearby caves to observe the sabbath in secret, were betrayed ... and all burned to death."



Though they were persecuted, **Daniel** prophesied:

"But the people who know their **God** shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Around 167 BC, **Mattathias** and his sons began the **Maccabean Revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes**.

Judas Maccabaeus was finally successful in driving the enemy out c.164 BC.

When the **Second Temple** was cleansed of all pagan defilement, a week long re-dedication began on the **25th day of Kislev**, c.164 BC.



There was a problem -- there was only found enough holy olive oil to light **the golden lampstand - the menorah**, for one day, and it would take a week before more could be made.

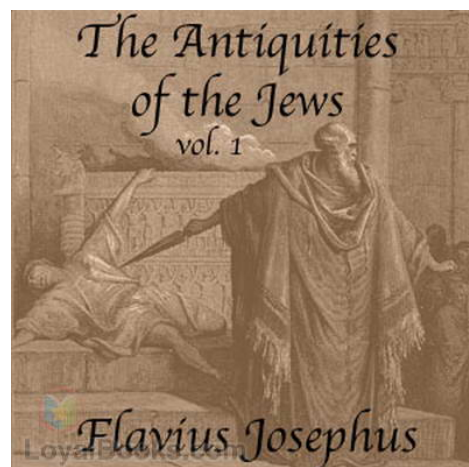
The decision was made to **relight it** anyway, and **miraculously, the light burned for eight days.**

This is celebrated annually as the **Feast of Dedication**, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, or **HANUKKAH**, which is the Hebrew word for "**dedication.**"

Flavius Josephus wrote in the **Jewish Antiquities** (12.7.6-7 316-325) that c.164 BC:

"The generals of **Antiochus' armies** having been **defeated** ...

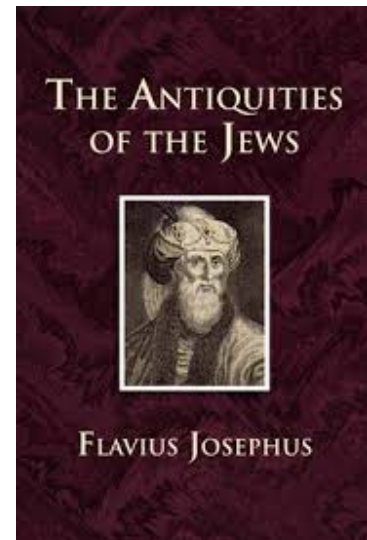
Judah Maccabee assembled the people and told them that after the many victories which God had given them they ought to go up to **Jerusalem** and **purify the Temple** ...



But when he with the whole multitude came to Jerusalem and found the Temple deserted, its gates burned down, and plants growing in the Temple of their own accord because of the desolation, he and those with him began to lament ..."

Josephus continued:

"He had carefully purged it he brought in new vessels -- **the menorah**, the table and the incense altar, which were made of gold ...



... And on the 25th day of the month Kislev, which the Macedonians call Apellaios, **they lighted the lights that were on the menorah**, and **offered incense upon the altar**, and laid the loaves upon the table, and offered whole burnt offerings upon the new altar.

As it happened, these things took place on **the very same day** on which, **three years before**, the divine worship had been reduced to an impure and profane form of worship;

for **the Temple had remained desolate for three years** after being made so by **Antiochus ..."**

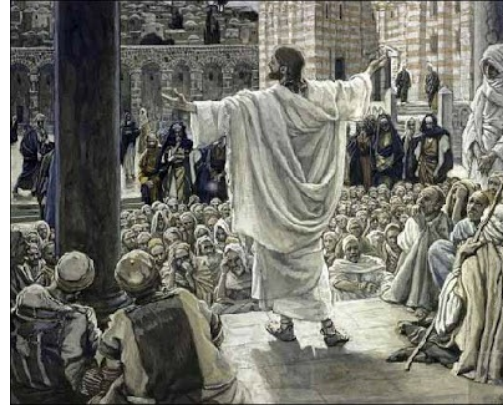
Josephus concluded:

"And so **Judah** and his fellow citizens **celebrated the festival of the restoration** of the sacrifices of the **Temple for eight days ...**

They honored God, and delighted themselves with psalms of praise and the playing of harps.

Indeed, they were **so very glad** at the revival of their customs and, after so long a time, having unexpectedly regained their right to worship, that **they made it a law for their posterity** that they should **keep a festival celebrating the restoration of their Temple worship for eight days.**"

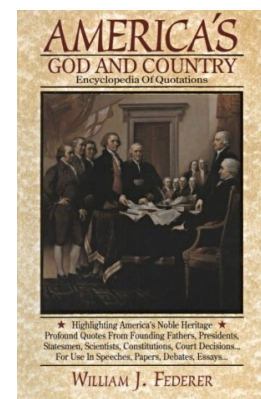
The New Testament Book of John, chapter 10:22-23, recorded that even **Jesus** observed the **Feast of Dedication**:



"At that time the **Feast of the Dedication** took place at **Jerusalem**; it was winter, and **Jesus** was walking in the temple in the portico of **Solomon**.

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.'"

[America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)



The many centuries of **Hanukkah candles** being lit during the winter might have been **an inspiration** for the **Christian tradition** of putting **lights in tree branches** to depict the sky above Bethlehem.



Various U.S. Presidents acknowledged **Hanukkah**:

Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote to Samuel I. Rosenman, President of the Jewish Education Committee in New York, December 16, 1940:

"Dear Sam, Please convey my best wishes to your co-workers in the Jewish Education Committee of New York, at the annual **Hanukkah** Dinner ...

Our modern **democratic way of life** has its deepest roots in our great common religious tradition, which for ages past has taught to civilized mankind the dignity of the human being, **his equality before God**, and his **responsibility** in the making of a better and fairer world ...

The world (is) ... engaged in a **great spiritual struggle** to test whether that **ancient wisdom** is to endure, or whether ... some few men shall dominate multitudes of others and dictate to them their thinking, their religion, their living ...

We need the sustaining, buttressing aid of those **great ethical religious teachings** which are the **heritage of our modern civilization**.

For 'not upon strength nor upon power, but upon **the spirit of God**' shall our democracy be founded."

In 1951, **President Harry S Truman** received a presentation of a **Hanukkah** menorah from Israel's Prime Minister, **David Ben-Gurion**.

On December 17, 1979, **President Jimmy Carter** was the first President to participate in **Hanukkah**. He walked from the White House to Lafayette Park to light the **National Menorah** erected by the American Friends of Lubavitch.

Carter commented:

"It's a real honor for me to come from the White House here to this ceremony celebrating the commencement of **Chanukah**, last night, the **Feast of Lights**.

As many of you know, the season of **Chanukah** commemorates the **victory of religious freedom** ...

At the commencement of the celebration of this annual event, this **season of thanksgiving and closeness to God**, there was a **miracle** within which the **candle** which was **supposed to only burn a short time burned for 8 days and nights** ...

This **miracle** showed that **God meets our needs. If we depend on Him, He will meet our needs**. This also shows that there is a need to celebrate **courage** and to remember that **hope** in one's breast need never die ...

... The first candle that I lit, the shammes candle, has given its light now in this glass cage to five other candles.

It has not itself been diminished. It shows that when **we give life and love to others**, the life and love in **our own hearts** is **not diminished** ... It grows the more **we share it**.

So, tonight we pray that **our closeness to God**, our memory of these fine commitments of human beings

down through the ages will strengthen our desires to share our life and our love ...

I'm very grateful that this beautiful menorah has been dedicated for the commemoration of the season of **Chanukah**, and I'm very grateful as President to be partaking in this commemoration of **a season when human beings are drawn closer to God** and, in that spirit, have confidence that the future will bring us a **better life with God and with one another.**"

President Ronald Reagan stated in his **Hanukkah** Message, 1983:

"Whether we be **Americans** or **Israelis**, we are **all children of Abraham, children of the same God**. The bonds between our two peoples are growing stronger, and they **must not and will never be broken**.

President George H.W. Bush stated in his **Hanukkah** Message, 1991:

"When **Judah Maccabee** and his followers prepared to **rededicate the Temple in Jerusalem**, they found ... **only enough oil to light the menorah for one night**. **Miraculously, it lasted eight.**"

In 1996, the **U.S. Postal Service** unveiled the first stamp commemorating **Hanukkah**.



President Bill Clinton stated in his **Hanukkah** Message, 1997:

"From the days of the **ancient Maccabees** down to our present time, **tyrants** have sought to **deny people the free expression of their faith** and the right to live

according to their own **conscience** and convictions ...

Hanukkah symbolizes the **heroic struggle** of all who seek to **defeat such oppression** and the **miracles** that come to those full of **faith and courage**.

This holiday holds special meaning for us in America, where **freedom of religion** is one of the **cornerstones of our democracy**.

The coming year will mark the 50th anniversary of the **State of Israel**, where the story of the first **Hanukkah** took place **so many centuries ago** ...

May the **candles of the menorah** light our way to a true and lasting **peace** for the people of the Middle East."

President George W. Bush remarked lighting the **Hanukkah Menorah** in the White House, December 10, 2001:

"Tonight, for the first time in American history, the **Hanukkah menorah** will be lit at the White House residence ... The **magnificent menorah** before us was crafted over a century ago in the **city of Lvov** ...

The Jews of Lvov fell **victim** to the **horror of the Nazi Holocaust**, but their great **menorah** survived. And as God promised Abraham, **the people of Israel still live** ...

We're reminded of the **ancient story of Israel's courage** and of the **power of faith to make the darkness bright**.

We can see the **heroic spirit of the Maccabees lives on** in Israel today, and we trust that a better day is coming, when this **Festival of Freedom** will be celebrated in **a world free from terror**."

President Donald J. Trump remarked on **Hanukkah**, December 12, 2017:

"The miracle of Hanukkah began more than 2,000 years ago, when the practice of Judaism was made punishable by death. **A small band of Jewish patriots rose up and reclaimed their Jewish identity by vanquishing a mighty army.**

In their pursuit to **rededicate their holy temple**, the Jewish heroes found **only enough oil to light the temple's menorah for one night**. However, **a miracle occurred** and with **God's grace** the **oil lasted for eight days**.

On this holiday, we are proud to stand with the Jewish people who shine as a light to all nations. **We also stand with the people of Israel, the Jewish State**, which has itself a **miraculous history of overcoming the tallest of odds**.

We hope that those observing the holiday here, in **Israel**, and around the world have **a wonderful holiday.**"

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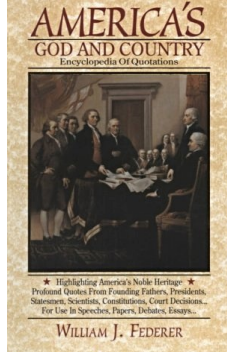
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