

All Christians Should Celebrate Hanukkah. (revised and updated 12/13/22)

Please allow me, Br. Shawn Benedict, to explain why.

Hanukkah (Chanukah and Hanukah) commemorates the miracle of the holy oil for the Light of Presence in the rededicated Second Temple, lasting eight full days. However, it was only enough oil for one day. The word Hanukkah is derived from the Hebrew verb meaning to dedicate. Therefore, Hanukkah is the feast of the Rededication of the Temple. It is celebrated on the 25th day of the month of Kislev because that is when the Jewish People stopped fighting their oppressors. The battle occurred during the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire, a Greek Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid dynasty fr All Christians Should Celebrate Hanukkah. (revised and updated 12/13/22)

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The story is preserved in the books of First and Second Maccabees in precise detail, including the actual lighting of the menorah. It is in 1 Maccabees 4:36-61 "The Rededication of the Temple. There are multiple

references to Hanukkah in the [Mishna](#) (Bikkurim 1:6, Rosh HaShanah 1:3, Taanit 2:10, Megillah 3:4 and 3:6, Moed Katan 3:9, and Bava Kama 6:6), though specific laws are not described. The miracle of the one-day supply of oil miraculously lasting eight days is first described in the [Talmud](#), committed to writing about 600 years after the events described in the books of Maccabees." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah>)

Talmud, Shabbat 23b.: Commencing with the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev there are eight days upon which there shall be neither mourning nor fasting. For albeit the Greeks entered the temple and defiled the oil, it was when the might of the Hasmonean overcame and vanquished them that, upon search, a single cruse of undefiled oil sealed by the High Priest was found. In it was oil for the needs of a solitary day.

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The oil in the cruse burned eight days.

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When the [Second Temple](#) in Jerusalem was looted and services stopped, [Judaism](#) was outlawed. In 167 BC, [Antiochus](#) ordered an altar to [Zeus](#) erected in the Temple. He banned [brit milah](#) (circumcision) and ordered pigs to be sacrificed at the altar of the temple.^[23]

Antiochus's actions provoked a large-scale revolt. [Mattathias](#) (Mattityahu), a Jewish priest, and his five sons [Jochanan](#), [Simeon](#), [Eleazar](#), [Jonathan](#), and [Judah](#) led a rebellion against Antiochus starting with Mattathias killing first a Jew who wanted to comply with Antiochus's order to sacrifice to Zeus and then a Greek official who was to enforce the government's behest (1 Mac. 2, 24-25^[24]). Judah became known as Yehuda HaMakabi ("Judah the Hammer"). By 166 BC Mattathias had died, and Judah took his place as leader. By 165 BC the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid monarchy was successful. The Temple was liberated and rededicated. The festival of Hanukkah was instituted to celebrate this event.^[25] Judah ordered the Temple to be cleansed, a new altar to be

built in place of the polluted one and new holy vessels to be made. According to the Talmud, unadulterated and undefiled pure olive oil with the seal of the [kohen gadol](#) (high priest) was needed for the menorah in the Temple, which was required to burn throughout the night every night. The story goes that one flask was found with only enough oil to burn for one day, yet it burned for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of [kosher](#) oil for the menorah. An eight-day festival was declared by the Jewish sages to commemorate this miracle.

The version of the story in 1 Maccabees states that an eight-day celebration of songs and sacrifices was proclaimed upon re-dedication of the altar, and makes no specific mention of the miracle of the oil. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah>)

The *Scroll of Antiochus* concludes with the following words:

...After this, the sons of Israel went up to the Temple and rebuilt its gates and purified the Temple from the dead bodies and from the defilement. And they sought after pure [olive oil](#) to light the lamps therewith, but could not find any, except one bowl that was sealed with the signet ring of the High Priest from the days of Samuel the prophet and they knew that it was pure. There was in it [enough oil] to light [the lamps therewith] for one day, but the God of heaven whose name dwells there put therein his blessing and they were able to light from it eight days. Therefore, the sons of Hashmonai made this covenant and took upon themselves a solemn vow, they and the sons of Israel, all of them, to publish amongst the sons of Israel, [to the end] that they might observe these eight days of joy and honour, as the days of the feasts written in [the book of] the Law; [even] to light in them so as to make known to those who come after them that their God wrought for them salvation from heaven. In them, it is not permitted to mourn, neither to decree a fast [on those days], and anyone who has a vow to perform, let him perform it.

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Celebrations usually include lighting a unique candelabrum that has nine branches, called the menorah (Chanukia/Hanukiah). Each night one more candle is lit for the eight days of the holydays. Usually, there is an additional branch up and above the others, called the shamash, Hebrew for the attendant, with which the candles are lit. There are two different

traditions (Hillel and Shammai) on how to light the candles. The Shammai custom starts with 8 and goes to 1, while Hillel custom starts with 1 and goes to 8 candles. Jewish Law and practice decided on the custom of Hillel.

In thinking about why we might celebrate this Miracle of God three reasons have come to mind.

My first reason to celebrate Hanukkah is this miracle is in Sacred Scripture. The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees are not part of the Tanakh, the Palestinian Hebrew Jewish Bible, or canon. These books, however, are included in the Alexandrian Jewish canon known as the Septuagint. 21st Century Jews of all traditions widely accept the Septuagint. It is referenced and compared against the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Latin ancient manuscripts of Sacred Scripture by all those who work in the field of research for the most ancient and accurate texts of Sacred Scriptures. We also know the King James Bible of 1611, revered as the Protestant Bible, was initially published with these books in it and that over time, printers dropped the so-called deuterocanonical and apocryphal books and thereby gave rise to the so-called Protestant Bible being different than the so-called Catholic and Orthodox Bibles. (Bruce M. Metzger)

As you can see, this omission is not based on any actual difference in Theology but on the result of publishers omitting approximately 17 books and parts of books. So, in reality, all Christians should celebrate this miracle that is recorded in the Bible. We rejoice that the God Who is Light (1 John 1:5) demonstrated to the Jewish People after one of their captivity experiences the Divine real presence by sustaining the human-crafted Light of God lantern in the Temple for eight days with a one-day supply of oil. Maintaining the light was an act of grace. Perhaps we can hear the echo of the famous words, My grace is enough for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness, which Resurrected and Ascended Our Lord Jesus said to Paul in a vision. (2 Cor. 12:9)

My second reason to celebrate Hanukkah is it is a miracle of lights, a Festival of the Light of God coming into the darkness of the evil of the world of the destroyed Temple during captivity in the story of Israel, but also into the destroyed Temple of the Earth due the sinful and selfish choices of humanity, and a false desire to be like God (Genesis 3:4), and into the unique temple of each heart, mind, and soul that is in constant need of

rededication to God and being filled with the Light of Christ and the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. God is Light, and in God, there is no darkness at all. (1John 1:5).

Now we know that Jesus is the Light to the Nations, Gentiles, and the glory of Israel, as Simeon declared in the Temple (Luke 2:32). Jesus is the Light of the World, and He has promised that all who follow Jesus will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. (John 8:12) Having received the Light of Christ, we are now called to be that Light for all people everywhere. (Matthew 5:14)

Now Christ has commanded the Church to go to the ends of the earth as a light to the Gentiles, the Nations, to bring salvation to all nations. (Acts 13:47 and Matthew 28:19)

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Back on December 24, in the year 2016, it occurred to me during some prayer time that there is another reason there are eight candles and one in the middle as the servant candle.

When Peter discussed the time it is taking before Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven in 2 Peter Chapter 3, he referenced Psalm 90:4 where it says a thousand years are like a day come and gone. So Peter writes: Remember this; one day before the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day.

Barnabas, in his Letter, explains and develops this further when he writes:

Barnabas 14:6

For it is written how the Father chargeth Him to deliver us from darkness, and to prepare a holy people for Himself.

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Therefore saith the prophet; *I the Lord thy God called thee in righteousness, and I will lay hold of thy hand and will strengthen thee, and I have given thee to be a covenant of the race, a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth them that are bound from their fetters, and them that sit in darkness from their prison house.* We perceive then whence we were ransomed.

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Again the prophet saith; *Behold I have set Thee to be a light unto the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth; thus saith the Lord that ransomed thee, even God.*

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Again the prophet saith; *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the humble; He hath sent Me to heal them that are broken-hearted, to preach release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of recompense, to comfort all that mourn.*

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Finally He saith to them; *Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot away with.* Ye see what is His meaning ; it is not your present Sabbaths that are acceptable [unto Me], but the Sabbath which I have made, in the which, when I have set all things at rest, I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world.

Barnabas 15:9

Wherefore also we keep the eighth day for rejoicing, in the which also Jesus rose from the dead, and having been manifested ascended into the heavens.

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Thus, taken together, Peter, and more specifically Barnabas put forth the idea that the Church age is the Sixth Day, and when it is over, the Seventh Day the Millennial Rest shall come in, and the Book of Revelation shows that to be for 1, 000 years, or One Day. After the Seventh Day, the Sabbath Rest, the Millennial Rest, the Eighth Day will begin, the New Heavens and the New Earth are brought in, and God is All In All as stated in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 where Jesus hands over the Kingdom to God.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28. -- "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things

are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that God may be all in all."

Once again, we will see the perfect manifestation of their being one God of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:6) In the glory of the Eighth Day Revelation Chapter 21 gives a detailed description of what we should expect, including; And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with humanity, and God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people. God will personally be with them and be their God. (Revelation 21:3)

Here is what I have come to understand today, now December 25. There are eight candles on the menorah, one for each day, each Dispensation and the tall candle in the middle, the shamash, Hebrew for the attendant, is God the Light passing that Light to each and every age of the human story through presenting the Divine Self in service to the creation. Look at this analogy:

the First candle represents the First Dispensation = Innocence (to the fall of Adam and Eve) (Genesis 1:26 to 2:23)

the Second candle represents the Second Dispensation = Conscience
(Genesis 3 to 7) (to the flood of Noah)

the Third candle represents the Third Dispensation = Human Government
(Genesis 8:1 to 11:9) (to the building of the Tower of Babel)

the Fourth candle represents the Fourth Dispensation = Promise - Abraham

(Genesis 11:10 to 15:21) (to the falling into Egyptian slavery)

the Fifth candle represents the Fifth Dispensation = Law - Moses

(Sinai - Exodus 19:1-8 to Jesus declaring It is finished

while He was speaking from the Cross)

the Sixth candle represents the Sixth Dispensation = Church

Pentecost to the coming of Christ in the air, the resurrection of the believing dead and the transformation of the believing living, to meet the Lord in the air and the revealing of the Man Of Sin and the Tribulation period of seven years to the Return Of Christ to the earth to judge the living nations.

the Seventh candle represents the Seventh Dispensation = The Millennial Rest, the Kingdom of Christ on Earth until the Great White Throne Judgment, also called The Second Death in Scripture

the Eighth candle represents the Eighth Dispensation = New Heavens and New Earth; Creation renewed and restored to holiness.

With these three reasons, 1) Hanukkah is in Sacred Scripture and therefore a miracle for all of the People of God, 2) It is the celebration of God's presence of Light in the world, and we know Jesus is the manifestation of The Light of God has come into the world, and 3) my personal newly understood parallel between the eight candles with the eight dispensations with the 9th being the very God Who is Light serving us as God's own created creatures as an act of Love to smash the rule of sin and darkness and bring all creation to the very Being of the Loving God as an act of salvation; it is clear to me we are called to celebrate Hanukkah.

Signed: Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, Pastor 12-13-2022 revision

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1 Corinthians 15:24-28. -- "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that God may be all in all."

Once again, we will see the perfect manifestation of their being one God of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:6) In the glory of the Eighth Day Revelation Chapter 21 gives a detailed description of what we should expect, including; And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with humanity, and God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people. God will personally be with them and be their God. (Revelation 21:3)

Here is what I have come to understand today, now December 25. There are eight candles on the menorah, one for each day, each Dispensation and the tall candle in the middle, the shamash, Hebrew for the attendant, is God the Light passing that Light to each and every age of the human story through presenting the Divine Self in service to the creation. Look at this analogy:
the First candle represents the First Dispensation = Innocence (to the fall of Adam and Eve)

(Genesis 1:26 to 2:23)

the Second candle represents the Second Dispensation = Conscience
(Genesis 3 to 7) (to the flood of Noah)

the Third candle represents the Third Dispensation = Human Government
(Genesis 8:1 to 11:9) (to the building of the Tower of Babel)

the Fourth candle represents the Fourth Dispensation = Promise -
Abraham

(Genesis 11:10 to 15:21) (to the falling into Egyptian slavery)

the Fifth candle represents the Fifth Dispensation = Law - Moses
(Sinai - Exodus 19:1-8 to Jesus declaring It is finished
while He was speaking from the Cross)

the Sixth candle represents the Sixth Dispensation = Church
Pentecost to the coming of Christ in the air, the resurrection of

the believing dead and the transformation of the believing living, to meet the Lord in the air and the revealing of the Man Of Sin and the Tribulation period of seven years to the Return Of Christ to the earth to judge the living nations.

the Seventh candle represents the Seventh Dispensation = The Millennial Rest, the Kingdom of Christ on Earth until the Great White Throne Judgment, also called The Second Death in Scripture
the Eighth candle represents the Eighth Dispensation = New Heavens and New Earth, Creation renewed and restored to holiness.

With these three reasons, 1) Hanukkah is in Sacred Scripture and therefore a miracle for all of the People of God, 2) It is the celebration of God's presence of Light in the world, and we know Jesus is the manifestation of The Light of God has come into the world, and 3) my personal newly understood parallel between the eight candles with the eight dispensations with the 9th being the very God Who is Light serving us as God's own created creatures as an act of Love to smash the rule of sin and darkness and bring all creation to the very Being of the Loving God as an action of salvation; it is clear to me we are called to celebrate Hanukkah.

Signed: Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, Pastor 12-13-2022 revision