

Hanukkah | Should/Can Christians Celebrate?

- Historical dedication • Biblical discernment • Family remembrance
- Finding the Ancient Path | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjbB9GEuHMA>

The Question

- What does Scripture command?
- What does history record?
- Which practices are later customs?

Not One of the Commanded Feasts

- Leviticus 23 identifies Yehovah's appointed times
- Hanukkah arose in the Second Temple era
- Commemoration is different from a Torah command

Feast of Dedication | John 10:22-23

- Yeshua is in Solomon's Porch during the winter Feast
- His presence is recorded explicitly
- Specific customs He practiced are not stated

The Historical Crisis

- Antiochus IV and Seleucid rule
- Restrictions on covenant practices
- Temple desecration and religious coercion

Mattathias and the Revolt

- Mattathias resists compulsory sacrifice
- His sons carry forward the resistance
- Historical courage is not a modern warrant for violence

Judah Maccabeus

- Military campaigns lead to the recovery of Jerusalem
- Rededication of the Temple becomes central
- 1 Maccabees is a historical source

Rededicating the Altar

- Purifying the sanctuary • Rebuilding the altar
- New Temple utensils and restored worship
- Eight days of dedication and rejoicing

The Eight-Day Celebration

- 1 Maccabees 4 describes eight days
- A later tradition recounts oil lasting eight days
- Do not confuse history with later tradition

Menorah and Hanukkah

- Exodus 25: seven-branched sanctuary menorah
- Hanukkah: eight lights plus the shamash
- Lighting practices are later customs

The Light Motif

- Temple light and faithfulness
- Psalm 119:105 — God's Word as light
- Matthew 5:14-16 — disciples as lights

Ezekiel 8 as an Analogy

- Ezekiel condemns idolatry in the sanctuary
- The Teaching applies this as a warning about corrupt worship
- Not the historical origin of Hanukkah

Conviction Under Pressure

- Daniel 3 — refuse idol worship
- Daniel 6 — prayer despite prohibition
- Consider faithfulness and courage

How Families Observe

- Lighting candles and prayers
- Meals, songs, study, gifts and dreidels
- Customary practices, not divine requirements

Common Foods and Customs

- Latkes and sufganiyot
- Gifts and giving to those in need
- Dreidel: “a great miracle happened there/here”

John 10: Careful Reading

- Do not go beyond what the text says
- Yeshua's location is explicit
- Obligatory observance is not commanded

Christian Freedom and Discernment

- Distinguish voluntary remembrance from covenant commands
- Treat differing family convictions respectfully
- Keep Yehovah's Word central

What About Christmas Comparisons?

- Participants contrast inherited customs
- Historical origin claims warrant verification
- Focus on truth without judging families

The Speaker's Main Takeaway

- Faithfulness to Yehovah matters most
- Mattathias and Judah are models of resolve in the Teaching
- Remember without treating tradition as Torah

Questions for Fellowship

- What does Leviticus 23 command?
- What does John 10 actually report?
- How do we honor history without binding consciences?

Key Scriptures

- Leviticus 23; John 10:22-23
- 1 Maccabees 2 and 4; Ezekiel 8
- Daniel 3; Psalm 119:105; Matthew 5:14-16

Closing Reflection

- Study Scripture and historical accounts in their proper context
- Celebrate voluntarily and respectfully
- Remain faithful to Yehovah and walk in Yeshua's ways