



Are You A Chanukkah Resistant Messianic?

By Rabbi Reuel Dillon

The following are a few notes regarding the observance of Chanukkah for Messianic believers.

~ Chanukkah is not a replacement for Christmas

- I. Christmas is a celebration with it's foundations in Paganism.
- II. Chanukkah celebrates victory over paganism and the rejection of it.
- III. It is common with any joyous celebration to give gifts. Thus, the giving of gifts does not equal the celebration of Christmas nor is Chanukkah a substitute for Christmas.
- IV. Chanukkah's purpose is to magnify the Torah (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 42:21) and thus is indeed a fulfillment of a mitzvah as also seen in Messiah's words (Mat.5:16-19).
- V. Christmas is a violation of Torah as it incorporates paganism.
- VI. The celebration of Chanukkah was also patterned after Sukkot when Solomon (Shlomo) first dedicated the temple during the time of Sukkot.

~ Afraid Of Giving Chanukkah The Same Attention As The Moedim (Holy Days)?

- I. Chanukkah is not given the same status as the Biblically commanded Holy Days...
- II. People do not have take the day off and make it a Sabbath as the Moedim (Holy Days) are.
- III. For Chanukkah there is not a holy convocation with accompanying Torah readings as with the Biblically commanded Moedim.

~ Why Celebrate Chanukkah?

- I. Yeshua celebrated Chanukkah. In the book of Yochanan (John) chapter 10 verse 22 it shows that Yeshua made a special trip to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) to be at The Temple during Chanukkah. This is no coincidence as Yeshua did not just go to Yerushalayim for any reason and any time. Yeshua and many of the Jewish people whom did not live in Yerushalayim primarily traveled to the Temple for special times including the Moedim (Holy Days) and Chanukkah. Seeing that Chanukkah is about the celebration of the rededication of the Temple and a celebration of Torah observance over paganism...it is no surprise to see Yeshua in the Temple honoring the celebration of the re-dedication of his Father's Temple...why else would the Biblical writer mention Chanukkah unless it was significant and important? I for one, believe that everything in scripture is there for a reason and I believe in this passage it was mentioned to be a witness that Yeshua was thoroughly Jewish and He himself observed Chanukkah along with his people.
- II. The Jewish people from Yeshua's time have always celebrated Chanukkah. It was and is a national celebration for Yisrael. It would be highly unlikely and would definitely would have been notable and noticeable by Yeshua's peers if He and His family did not celebrate this National special time of Chanukkah.
- III. Chanukkah magnifies the Torah as the theme of Chanukkah is keeping Torah in hard times when society is pushing us to give it up. We are commanded to use every opportunity to magnify and glorify our Father's Torah and let our light shine (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 42:21, Matt. 5:16-19). The Festival Of Lights (Chanukkah) is a great time to take opportunity to do this and teach others about our Heavenly Father's Torah.
- IV. The time of Chanukkah is significant to observe because it calls to remembrance the words of Messiah in regards to the "end days", understanding the abomination of Desolation in the past as found in the Chanukkah account and as spoken of by Daniel the prophet. The observance of Chanukkah is significant and key to understanding the future coming persecution and the coming of False Messiah and his world wide government.
- V. Like Purim, Chanukkah is a great way for Gentiles to identify and join the Jewish people (the people of God) and it's culture. Unfortunately, a few in the Messianic community deliberately alienate themselves from the Jewish people and the commonwealth of Yisrael when it is not necessary. The effect of this is disunity amongst brethren and can leave a bad taste in the mouth of our Jewish brothers and sisters, especially if believers are taking a stand against a celebration that commemorates freedom to keep Torah and a victory over paganism.
- VI. Chanukkah also has a future Biblical significance for the people of God to look forward to as we see in Yeshayahu (Isaiah) chapter 2 when the House (Temple) of

Adonai will be once again reestablished and rededicated (Chanukkah) following a Messianic revolution which will overcome the pagan powers of this world making it safe for God's people to observe Torah in the coming Messianic Kingdom living in harmony. This will indeed be reason for worldwide celebration of Chanukkah (Rededication) in the future.. This is also something we can celebrate and look forward to in our celebration of Chanukkah today. Note the connection between Sukkot and Chanukkah in the future as it has similar connections to Sukkot in the past. Looked upon in this light, Chanukkah truly is a Biblical observance to be celebrated with great Joy!

~ Inconsistency In Logic

The Torah commands us not to be partial in judgment. Those whom are in the Messianic Torah pursuant community and reject the observance of Chanukkah have several inconsistencies in their logic when compared to some of their other observances, which are also not commanded in Torah.

- I. While many whom reject Chanukkah and take a stand against it (a celebration of Torah observance over paganism) saying that it is not commanded in Torah will although in turn celebrate days like "ThanksGiving". Individuals whom do this site that it has no ties with paganism and that it does have ties with the festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles). They also site that the theme of giving thanks is good...But, their very same reasons for celebrating "ThanksGiving" day are even more true in the case of Chanukkah. It is interesting to note that an ancient name for Chanukkah is the "Sukkot Of Fire". It is indeed connected with Sukkot and patterned after it. Chanukkah is a celebration of Thanks Giving for the freedom given to us by Adonai to keep our Heavenly Father's Torah in turbulent times. Logic suggests that if one was going to choose to celebrate "ThanksGiving" for the reasons given above...there would be even more reason for such a one to celebrate Chanukkah.
- II. Many people whom reject Chanukkah on the basis that it is not commanded in Torah will in turn also celebrate "New Years Eve". Again, many people whom reject Chanukkah choose to celebrate traditional days found only on the United States yearly calendar which are also observances not commanded in Torah. But, when it comes to the calendar of Yisrael, and to it's commonwealth, they are not consistent in their logic. There are even some that say they have no problem with celebrating New Year's even because it doesn't have any religious value and is secular, but when it comes to Chanukkah they reject it because it is religious in nature. Are these truly Godly views??
- III. But, the hypocrisy doesn't stop there...People whom reject Chanukkah on the basis that it is not commanded in Torah will in turn celebrate the "4th Of July". They choose to identify with the American people in this way as many of us do...and there is nothing wrong with it. But, Chanukkah in many ways is the equivalent of the 4th Of July for Yisrael and the Jewish people as they were liberated to keep Torah from their pagan oppressors, regained their Temple, land, and independence. If we have joined

ourselves to Yisrael and it's people, why then would we choose to identify ourselves with the people of America, yet not the people and commonwealth of Yisrael?

- IV. Many people whom reject Chanukkah on the basis that it is not commanded will in turn celebrate birthdays all throughout the year without any problem...yet they are not commanded in Torah.
- V. Many people whom reject Chanukkah on the basis that it is not commanded in Torah will in turn celebrate their wedding anniversary with no concerns whether or not it is commanded in Torah.
- VI. Many whom reject the observance of Chanukkah based on the premise that it is not commanded in the Torah will although spend much, much more time throughout the whole year observing a favorite t.v. shows, video games, radio shows, and many other ungodly things which are not commanded to observe, and of which doesn't lift up or magnify the Torah, nor does it glorify our Father in Heaven...Yet the celebration of Chanukkah does!!

It is correct that Chanukkah is not a commanded celebration as found in Torah. One of the reasons that Chanukkah is not mentioned in the TeNaKh is because the events in question took place over a hundred years after the last book of the TeNaKh was written. But, as mentioned above, there are many good Biblical reasons concerning the past and future for God's people to observe this special time. For those of you whom choose to reap the lessons and joy from this special time and season...may you have a joyous Chanukkah!

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah,

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“Jew & Gentile, One In Messiah”