

FEASTS (Moedim): Erev Chanukah; 1 Candle (Festival of Lights).

Erev Chanukah One: 1 Candle (Festival of Lights).

Erev Chanukah 1:

Numbers 7:1-17.

1 . Offerings of the Leaders. .

It happened on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, and had anointed it and sanctified it, with all its furniture, and the altar with all its vessels, and had anointed and sanctified them;

2 that the princes of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, offered. These were the princes of the tribes. These are they who were over those who were numbered:

3 and they brought their offering before YAHWEH, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for every two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they presented them before the tabernacle.

4 YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying,

5 "Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the service of the Tent of Meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, to every man according to his service."

6 Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites.

7 He gave two wagons and four oxen to the sons of Gershon, according to their service:

8 and he gave four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

9 But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because the service of the sanctuary belonged to them; they carried it on their shoulders.

10 The princes gave offerings for the dedication of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes gave their offerings before the altar.

11 YAHWEH said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedication of the altar."

12 He who offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah,

13 and his offering was: one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering;

14 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;

15 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;

16 one male goat for a sin offering;

17 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

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BOOKS OF MACCABEES! .

1 MACCABEES!:

(1 Maccabees 1:1-63 NAB-A) :

. Alexander the Great. .

After Alexander the Macedonian, Philip's son, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated Darius, king of the Persians and Medes, he became king in his place, having first ruled in Greece. He fought many campaigns, captured fortresses, and put kings to death. He advanced to the ends of the earth, gathering plunder from many nations; the earth fell silent before him, and his heart became proud and arrogant. He collected a very strong army and conquered provinces, nations, and rulers, and they became his tributaries. But after all this he took to his bed, realizing that he was going to die. He therefore summoned his officers, the nobles, who had been brought up with him from his youth, to divide his kingdom among them while he was still alive. Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died. So his officers took over his kingdom, each in his own territory, and after his death they all put on royal crowns, and so did their sons after them for many years, causing much distress over the earth.

. Antiochus Epiphanes and Renegade Jews. .

There sprang from these a sinful offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, once a hostage at Rome. He became king in the year one hundred and thirty-seven of the kingdom of the Greeks. In those days there appeared in Israel men who were breakers of the Torah, and they seduced many people, saying: "Let us go and make an alliance with the Gentiles all around us; since we separated from them, many evils have come upon us." The proposal was agreeable; some from among the people promptly went to the king, and he authorized them to introduce the way of living of the Gentiles. Thereupon they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the Gentile custom. They covered over the mark of their circumcision and abandoned the holy covenant; they allied themselves with the Gentiles and sold themselves to wrongdoing.

. Antiochus in Egypt. .

When his kingdom seemed secure, Antiochus proposed to become king of Egypt, so as to rule over both kingdoms. He invaded Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants, and with a large fleet, to make war on Ptolemy, king of Egypt. Ptolemy was frightened at his presence and fled, leaving many casualties. The fortified cities in the land of Egypt were captured, and Antiochus plundered the land of Egypt.

. Persecution of the Jews. .

After Antiochus had defeated Egypt in the year one hundred and forty-three, he returned and went up to Israel and to Jerusalem with a strong force. He insolently invaded the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the lampstand for the light with all its fixtures, the offering table, the cups and the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the golden ornament on the facade of the temple. He stripped off everything, and took away the gold and silver and the precious vessels; he also took all the hidden treasures he could find. Taking all this, he went back to his own country, after he had

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spoken with great arrogance and shed much blood. And there was great mourning for Israel, in every place where they dwelt, and the rulers and the elders groaned. Virgins and young men languished, and the beauty of the women was disfigured. Every bridegroom took up lamentation, she who sat in the bridal chamber mourned, And the land was shaken on account of its inhabitants, and all the house of Jacob was covered with shame.

. The Occupation of Jerusalem. .

Two years later, the king sent the Mysian commander to the cities of Judah, and he came to Jerusalem with a strong force. He spoke to them deceitfully in peaceful terms, and won their trust. Then he attacked the city suddenly, in a great onslaught, and destroyed many of the people in Israel. He plundered the city and set fire to it, demolished its houses and its surrounding walls, took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle. Then they built up the City of David with a high, massive wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. There they installed a sinful race, perverse men, who fortified themselves inside it, storing up weapons and provisions, and depositing there the plunder they had collected from Jerusalem. And they became a great threat. The citadel became an ambush against the sanctuary, and a wicked adversary to Israel at all times. And they shed innocent blood around the sanctuary; they defiled the sanctuary. Because of them the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled away, and she became the abode of strangers. She became a stranger to her own offspring, and her children forsook her. Her sanctuary was as desolate as a wilderness; her feasts were turned into mourning, Her sabbaths to shame, her honor to contempt. Her dishonor was as great as her glory had been, and her exaltation was turned into mourning.

. Installation of Gentile Cults. .

Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, each abandoning his particular customs. All the Gentiles conformed to the command of the king, and many Israelites were in favor of his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. The king sent messengers with letters to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, ordering them to follow customs foreign to their land; to prohibit holocausts, sacrifices, and libations in the sanctuary, to profane the sabbaths and feast days, to desecrate the sanctuary and the sacred ministers, to build pagan altars and temples and shrines, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to let themselves be defiled with every kind of impurity and abomination, so that they might forget the Torah and change all their observances. Whoever refused to act according to the command of the king should be put to death. Such were the orders he published throughout his kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the cities of Judah to offer sacrifices, each city in turn. Many of the people, those who abandoned the Torah, joined them and committed evil in the land. Israel was driven into hiding, wherever places of refuge could be found. On the fifteenth day of the month Chislev, in the year one hundred and forty-five, the king erected the horrible abomination upon the altar of holocausts, and in the surrounding cities of Judah they built pagan altars. They also burnt incense at the doors of houses and in the streets. Any scrolls of the Torah which they found they tore up and burnt. Whoever was found with a scroll of the covenant, and whoever observed the Torah, was condemned to death by royal decree. So they used their power against Israel, against those who were caught, each month, in the cities. On the twenty-fifth day of each month they sacrificed on the altar erected over the altar of holocausts. Women who had had

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their children circumcised were put to death, in keeping with the decree, with the babies hung from their necks; their families also and those who had circumcised them were killed. But many in Israel were determined and resolved in their hearts not to eat anything unclean; they preferred to die rather than to be defiled with unclean food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. Terrible affliction was upon Israel.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 2:1-70 NAB-A) :

. Mattathias and His Sons. .

In those days Mattathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, left Jerusalem and settled in Modein. He had five sons: John, who was called Gaddi; Simon, who was called Thassi; Judas, who was called Maccabeus; Eleazar, who was called Avaran; and Jonathan, who was called Apphus. When he saw the sacrileges that were being committed in Judah and in Jerusalem, he said: "Woe is me! Why was I born to see the ruin of my people and the ruin of the holy city, and to sit idle while it is given into the hands of enemies, and the sanctuary into the hands of strangers? "Her temple has become like a man disgraced, her glorious ornaments have been carried off as spoils, Her infants have been murdered in her streets, her young men by the sword of the enemy. What nation has not taken its share of her realm, and laid its hand on her possessions? All her adornment has been taken away. From being free, she has become a slave. We see our sanctuary and our beauty and our glory laid waste, And the Gentiles have defiled them! Why are we still alive?" Then Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and mourned bitterly.

. Pagan Worship Refused. .

The officers of the king in charge of enforcing the apostasy came to the city of Modein to organize the sacrifices. Many of Israel joined them, but Mattathias and his sons gathered in a group apart. Then the officers of the king addressed Mattathias: "You are a leader, an honorable and great man in this city, supported by sons and kinsmen. Come now, be the first to obey the king's command, as all the Gentiles and the men of Judah and those who are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons shall be numbered among the King's Friends, and shall be enriched with silver and gold and many gifts." But Mattathias answered in a loud voice: "Although all the Gentiles in the king's realm obey him, so that each forsakes the religion of his fathers and consents to the king's orders, yet I and my sons and my kinsmen will keep to the covenant of our fathers. Elohim forbid that we should forsake the Torah and the commandments. We will not obey the words of the king nor depart from our religion in the slightest degree." As he finished saying these words, a certain Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein according to the king's order. When Mattathias saw him, he was filled with zeal; his heart was moved and his just fury was aroused; he sprang forward and killed him upon the altar. At the same time, he also killed the messenger of the king who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. Thus he showed his zeal for the Torah, just as Phinehas did with Zimri, son of Salu. Then Mattathias went through the city shouting, "Let everyone who is zealous for the Torah and who stands by the covenant

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follow after me!" Thereupon he fled to the mountains with his sons, leaving behind in the city all their possessions. Many who sought to live according to righteousness and religious custom went out into the desert to settle there, they and their sons, their wives and their cattle, because misfortunes pressed so hard on them. It was reported to the officers and soldiers of the king who were in the City of David, in Jerusalem, that certain men who had flouted the king's order had gone out to the hiding places in the desert. Many hurried out after them, and having caught up with them, camped opposite and prepared to attack them on the sabbath. "Enough of this!" the pursuers said to them. "Come out and obey the king's command, and your lives will be spared." But they replied, "We will not come out, nor will we obey the king's command to profane the sabbath." Then the enemy attacked them at once; but they did not retaliate; they neither threw stones, nor blocked up their own hiding places. They said, "Let us all die without reproach; heaven and earth are our witnesses that you destroy us unjustly." So the officers and soldiers attacked them on the sabbath, and they died with their wives, their children and their cattle, to the number of a thousand persons. When Mattathias and his friends heard of it, they mourned deeply for them. "If we all do as our kinsmen have done," they said to one another, "and do not fight against the Gentiles for our lives and our traditions, they will soon destroy us from the earth." On that day they came to this decision: "Let us fight against anyone who attacks us on the sabbath, so that we may not all die as our kinsmen died in the hiding places."

. Counter-Attack. .

Then they were joined by a group of Hasideans, valiant Israelites, all of them devout followers of the Torah. And all those who were fleeing from the disaster joined them and supported them. They gathered an army and struck down sinners in their anger and Torahbreakers in their wrath, and the survivors fled to the Gentiles for safety. Mattathias and his friends went about and tore down the pagan altars; they also enforced circumcision for any uncircumcised boys whom they found in the territory of Israel. They put to flight the arrogant, and the work prospered in their hands. They saved the Torah from the hands of the Gentiles and of the kings and did not let the sinner triumph.

. The Last Words of Mattathias. .

When the time came for Mattathias to die, he said to his sons: "Arrogance and scorn have now grown strong; it is a time of disaster and violent anger. Therefore, my sons, be zealous for the Torah and give your lives for the covenant of our fathers. "Remember the deeds that our fathers did in their times, and you shall win great glory and an everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, and it was reputed to him as uprightness? Joseph, when in distress, kept the commandment, and he became master of Egypt. Phinehas our father, for his burning zeal, received the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. Joshua, for executing his commission, became a judge in Israel. Caleb, for bearing witness before the assembly, received an inheritance in the land. David, for his piety, received as a heritage a throne of everlasting royalty. Elijah, for his burning zeal for the Torah, was taken up to heaven. Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, for their faith, were saved from the fire. Daniel, for his innocence, was delivered from the jaws of lions. And so, consider this from generation to generation, that none who hope in him shall fail in strength. Do not fear the words of a sinful man, for his glory ends in corruption and worms. Today he is exalted, and tomorrow he is not to be found, because he has returned to his dust, and his schemes have perished. Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the Torah, for by it you shall be glorified. "Here is your brother Simeon

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who I know is a wise man; listen to him always, and he will be a father to you. And Judas Maccabeus, a warrior from his youth, shall be the leader of your army and direct the war against the nations. You shall also gather about you all who observe the Torah, and you shall avenge the wrongs of your people. Pay back the Gentiles what they deserve, and observe the precepts of the Torah." Then he blessed them, and he was united with his fathers. He died in the year one hundred and forty-six, and was buried in the tombs of his fathers in Modein, and all Israel mourned him greatly.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 3:1-59 NAB-A) :

. The Early Victories of Judas. .

Then his son Judas, who was called Maccabeus, took his place. All his brothers and all who had joined his father supported him, and they carried on Israel's war joyfully. He spread abroad the glory of his people, and put on his breastplate like a giant. He armed himself with weapons of war; he planned battles and protected the camp with his sword. In his actions he was like a lion, like a young lion roaring for prey. He pursued the wicked, hunting them out, and those who troubled his people he destroyed by fire. The Torahbreakers were cowed by fear of him, and all evildoers were dismayed. By his hand redemption was happily achieved, and he afflicted many kings; He made Jacob glad by his deeds, and his memory is blessed forever. He went about the cities of Judah destroying the impious there. He turned away wrath from Israel and was renowned to the ends of the earth; he gathered together those who were perishing. Then Apollonius gathered the Gentiles, together with a large army from Samaria, to fight against Israel. When Judas learned of it, he went out to meet him and defeated and killed him. Many fell wounded, and the rest fled. Their possessions were seized and the sword of Apollonius was taken by Judas, who fought with it the rest of his life. But Seron, commander of the Syrian army, heard that Judas had gathered many about him, an assembly of faithful men ready for war. So he said, "I will make a name for myself and win glory in the kingdom by defeating Judas and his followers, who have despised the king's command." And again a large company of renegades advanced with him to help him take revenge on the Israelites. When he reached the ascent of Beth-horon, Judas went out to meet him with a few men. But when they saw the army coming against them, they said to Judas: "How can we, few as we are, fight such a mighty host as this? Besides, we are weak today from fasting." But Judas said: "It is easy for many to be overcome by a few; in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between deliverance by many or by few; for victory in war does not depend upon the size of the army, but on strength that comes from Heaven. With great presumption and Torahlessness they come against us to destroy us and our wives and children and to despoil us; but we are fighting for our lives and our Torah. He himself will crush them before us; so do not be afraid of them." When he finished speaking, he rushed suddenly upon Seron and his army, who were crushed before him. He pursued Seron down the descent of Beth-horon into the plain. About eight hundred of their men fell, and the rest fled to the country of the Philistines. Then Judas and his brothers began to be feared, and dread fell upon the Gentiles about them. His fame reached the king, and all the Gentiles talked about the battles of Judas.

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. The Policy of Antiochus. .

When Antiochus heard about these events, he was angry; so he ordered a muster of all the forces of his kingdom, a very strong army. He opened his treasure chests, gave his soldiers a year's pay, and commanded them to be prepared for anything. He then found that this exhausted the money in his treasury; moreover the income from the province was small, because of the dissension and distress he had brought upon the land by abolishing the Torah which had been in effect from of old. He feared that, as had happened more than once, he would not have enough for his expenses and for the gifts that he had previously given with a more liberal hand than the preceding kings. Greatly perplexed, he decided to go to Persia and levy tribute on those provinces, and so raise a large sum of money. He left Lysias, a nobleman of royal blood, in charge of the king's affairs from the Euphrates River to the frontier of Egypt, and commissioned him to take care of his son Antiochus until his own return. He entrusted to him half of the army, and the elephants, and gave him instructions concerning everything he wanted done. As for the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, Lysias was to send an army against them to crush and destroy the power of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem and efface their memory from the land. He was to settle foreigners in all their territory and distribute their land by lot. The king took the remaining half of the army and set out from Antioch, his capital, in the year one hundred and forty-seven; he crossed the Euphrates River and advanced inland.

. Preparations for Battle. .

Lysias chose Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor and Gorgias, capable men among the King's Friends, and with them he sent forty thousand men and seven thousand cavalry to invade the land of Judah and ravage it according to the king's orders. Setting out with all their forces, they came and pitched their camp near Emmaus in the plain. When the merchants of the country heard of their fame, they came to the camp, bringing fetters and a large sum of silver and gold, to buy the Israelites as slaves. A force from Idumea and from Philistia joined with them. Judas and his brothers saw that the situation had become critical now that armies were encamped within their territory; they knew of the orders which the king had given to destroy and utterly wipe out the people. So they said to one another, "Let us restore our people from their ruined estate, and fight for our people and our sanctuary!" The assembly gathered together to prepare for battle and to pray and implore mercy and compassion. Jerusalem was uninhabited, like a desert; not one of her children entered or came out. The sanctuary was trampled on, and foreigners were in the citadel; it was a habitation of Gentiles. Joy had disappeared from Jacob, and the flute and the harp were silent. Thus they assembled and went to Mizpah near Jerusalem, because there was formerly at Mizpah a place of prayer for Israel. That day they fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their clothes. They unrolled the scroll of the Torah, to learn about the things for which the Gentiles consulted the images of their idols. They brought with them the priestly vestments, the first fruits, and the tithes; and they brought forward the nazirites who had completed the time of their vows. And they cried aloud to Heaven: "What shall we do with these men, and where shall we take them? For your sanctuary has been trampled on and profaned, and your priests are in mourning and humiliation. Now the Gentiles are gathered together against us to destroy us. You know what they plot against us. How shall we be able to resist them unless you help us?" Then they blew the trumpets and cried out loudly. After this Judas appointed officers among the people, over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. He proclaimed that those who were building

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houses, or were just married, or were planting vineyards, and those who were afraid, could each return to his home, according to the Torah. Then the army moved off, and they camped to the south of Emmaus. Judas said: "Arm yourselves and be brave; in the morning be ready to fight these Gentiles who have assembled against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. It is better for us to die in battle than to witness the ruin of our nation and our sanctuary. Whatever Heaven wills, he will do."

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 4:1-61 NAB-A) :

. The Battle at Emmaus. .

Now Gorgias took five thousand infantry and a thousand picked cavalry, and this detachment set out at night in order to attack the camp of the Jews and take them by surprise. Some men from the citadel were their guides. Judas heard of it, and himself set out with his soldiers to attack the king's army at Emmaus, while the latter's forces were still scattered away from the camp. During the night Gorgias came into the camp of Judas, and found no one there; so he began to hunt for them in the mountains, saying, "They are fleeing from us." But at daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, who lacked such armor and swords as they would have wished. They saw the army of the Gentiles, strong and breastplated, flanked with cavalry, and made up of expert soldiers. Judas said to the men with him: "Do not be afraid of their numbers or dread their attack. Remember how our fathers were saved in the Red Sea, when Pharaoh pursued them with an army. So now let us cry to Heaven in the hope that he will favor us, remember his covenant with our fathers, and destroy this army before us today. All the Gentiles shall know that there is One who redeems and delivers Israel." When the foreigners looked up and saw them marching toward them, they came out of their camp for battle, and the men with Judas blew the trumpet. The battle was joined and the Gentiles were defeated and fled toward the plain. Their whole rearguard fell by the sword, and they were pursued as far as Gazara and the plains of Judea, to Azotus and Jamnia. About three thousand of their men fell. When Judas and the army returned from the pursuit, he said to the people: "Do not be greedy for the plunder, for there is a fight ahead of us, and Gorgias and his army are near us on the mountain. But now stand firm against our enemies and overthrow them. Afterward you can freely take the plunder." As Judas was finishing this speech, a detachment appeared, looking down from the mountain. They saw that their army had been put to flight and their camp was being burned. The smoke that could be seen indicated what had happened. When they realized this, they were terrified; and when they also saw the army of Judas in the plain ready to attack, they all fled to Philistine territory. Then Judas went back to plunder the camp, and his men collected much gold and silver, violet and crimson cloth, and great treasure. As they returned, they were singing hymns and glorifying Heaven, "for he is good, for his mercy endures forever."

. First Campaign of Lysias. .

Thus Israel had a great deliverance that day. But those of the foreigners who had escaped went and told Lysias all that had occurred. When he heard it he was disturbed and

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discouraged, because things in Israel had not turned out as he intended and as the king had ordered. So the following year he gathered together sixty thousand picked men and five thousand cavalry, to subdue them. They came into Idumea and camped at Beth-zur, and Judas met them with ten thousand men. Seeing that the army was strong, he prayed thus: "Blessed are you, O Savior of Israel, who broke the rush of the mighty one by the hand of your servant David and delivered the camp of the Philistines into the hand of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and his armor-bearer. Give this army into the hands of your people Israel; make them ashamed of their troops and their cavalry. Strike them with fear, weaken the boldness of their strength, and let them tremble at their own destruction. Strike them down by the sword of those who love you, that all who know your name may hymn your praise." Then they engaged in battle, and about five thousand of Lysias' men fell in hand-to-hand fighting. When Lysias saw his ranks beginning to give way, and the increased boldness of Judas, whose men were ready either to live or to die bravely, he withdrew to Antioch and began to recruit mercenaries so as to return to Judea with greater numbers.

. Cleansing and Dedication of the Temple. .

Then Judas and his brothers said, "Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it." So the whole army assembled, and went up to Mount Zion. They found the sanctuary desolate, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt, weeds growing in the courts as in a forest or on some mountain, and the priests' chambers demolished. Then they tore their clothes and made great lamentation; they sprinkled their heads with ashes and fell with their faces to the ground. And when the signal was given with trumpets, they cried out to Heaven. Judas appointed men to attack those in the citadel, while he purified the sanctuary. He chose blameless priests, devoted to the Torah; these purified the sanctuary and carried away the stones of the Abomination to an unclean place. They deliberated what ought to be done with the altar of holocausts that had been desecrated. The happy thought came to them to tear it down, lest it be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it; so they tore down the altar. They stored the stones in a suitable place on the temple hill, until a prophet should come and decide what to do with them. Then they took uncut stones, according to the Torah, and built a new altar like the former one. They also repaired the sanctuary and the interior of the temple and purified the courts. They made new sacred vessels and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. Then they burned incense on the altar and lighted the lamps on the lampstand, and these illuminated the temple. They also put loaves on the table and hung up curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken. Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is, the month of Chislev, in the year one hundred and forty-eight, they arose and offered sacrifice according to the Torah on the new altar of holocausts that they had made. On the anniversary of the day on which the Gentiles had defiled it, on that very day it was reconsecrated with songs, harps, flutes, and cymbals. All the people prostrated themselves and adored and praised Heaven, who had given them success. For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar and joyfully offered holocausts and sacrifices of deliverance and praise. They ornamented the facade of the temple with gold crowns and shields; they repaired the gates and the priests' chambers and furnished them with doors. There was great joy among the people now that the disgrace of the Gentiles was removed. Then Judas and his brothers and the entire congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness on the anniversary every year for eight days, from the twenty-fifth day of the month Chislev. At that time they built high walls and strong

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towers around Mount Zion, to prevent the Gentiles from coming and trampling over it as they had done before. Judas also placed a garrison there to protect it, and likewise fortified Beth-zur, that the people might have a stronghold facing Idumea.

!! End of The Chapter.

!! End of Today's FEAST and Related Scriptures! Praise Yah! (HNV-yet version, in the public domain.)