

FEASTS (Moedim): Chanukah 5Candles (Festival of Lights).

Chanukah Five: 5 Candles (Feast of Dedication).

Chanukah 5:

Numbers 7:36-47.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon
37 gave his offering: 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;
38 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
39 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
40 one male goat for a sin offering;
41 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 Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.
42 On the sixth day, Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad
43 gave his offering: 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;
44 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
45 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
46 one male goat for a sin offering;
47 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 Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

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

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2 MACCABEES!:

(2 Maccabees 1:1-36 NAB-A) :

. A Letter to the Jews in Egypt. .

The Jews in Jerusalem and in the land of Judea send greetings to their brethren, the Jews in Egypt, and wish them true peace! May Elohim bless you and remember his covenant with his faithful servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. May he give to all of you a heart to worship him and to do his will readily and generously. May he open your heart to his Torah and his commandments and grant you peace. May he hear your prayers, and be reconciled to you, and never forsake you in time of adversity. Even now we are praying for you here. In the reign of Demetrius, the year one hundred and sixty-nine, we Jews wrote to you during the trouble and violence that overtook us in those years after Jason and his followers had revolted against the holy land and the kingdom, setting fire to the gatehouse and shedding innocent blood. But we prayed to YHWH, and our prayer was heard; we offered sacrifices and fine flour; we lighted the lamps and set out the loaves of bread. We are now reminding you to celebrate the feast of Booths in the month of Chislev. Dated in the year one hundred and eighty-eight.

. A Letter to Aristobulus. .

The people of Jerusalem and Judea, the senate, and Judas send greetings and good wishes to Aristobulus, counselor of King Ptolemy and member of the family of the anointed priests, and to the Jews in Egypt. Since we have been saved by Elohim from grave dangers, we give him great thanks for having fought on our side against the king; it was he who drove out those who fought against the holy city. When their leader arrived in Persia with his seemingly irresistible army, they were cut to pieces in the temple of the goddess Nanea through a deceitful stratagem employed by Nanea's priests. On the pretext of marrying the goddess, Antiochus with his Friends had come to the place to get its great treasures by way of dowry. When the priests of the Nanaeon had displayed the treasures, Antiochus with a few attendants came to the temple precincts. As soon as he entered the temple, the priests locked the doors. Then they opened a hidden trapdoor in the ceiling, hurled stones at the leader and his companions and struck them down. They dismembered the bodies, cut off their heads and tossed them to the people outside. Forever blessed be our Elohim, who has thus punished the wicked!

. Fire Consumes Nehemiah's Sacrifice. .

We shall be celebrating the purification of the temple on the twenty-fifth day of the month Chislev, so we thought it right to inform you, that you too may celebrate the feast of Booths and of the fire that appeared when Nehemiah, the builder of the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices. When our fathers were being exiled to Persia, devout priests of the time took some of the fire from the altar and hid it secretly in the hollow of a dry cistern, making sure that the place would be unknown to anyone. Many years later, when it so pleased Elohim, Nehemiah, commissioned by the king of Persia, sent the descendants of the priests who had hidden the fire to look for it. When they informed us that they could not find any fire, but only muddy water, he ordered them to scoop some out and bring it. After the material for the sacrifices had been prepared, Nehemiah ordered the priests to sprinkle with the water the wood and what lay on it. When this was

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done and in time the sun, which had been clouded over, began to shine, a great fire blazed up, so that everyone marveled. While the sacrifice was being burned, the priests recited a prayer, and all present joined in with them, Jonathan leading and the rest responding with Nehemiah. The prayer was as follows: "YHWH, YHWH Elohim, creator of all things, awesome and strong, just and merciful, the only king and benefactor, who alone are gracious, just, almighty, and eternal, Israel's savior from all evil, who chose our forefathers and sanctified them: accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Israel and guard and sanctify your heritage. Gather together our scattered people, free those who are the slaves of the Gentiles, look kindly on those who are despised and detested, and let the Gentiles know that you are our Elohim. Punish those who tyrannize over us and arrogantly mistreat us. Plant your people in your holy place, as Moses promised." Then the priests began to sing hymns. After the sacrifice was burned, Nehemiah ordered the rest of the liquid to be poured upon large stones. As soon as this was done, a flame blazed up, but its light was lost in the brilliance cast from a light on the altar. When the event became known and the king of the Persians was told that, in the very place where the exiled priests had hidden the fire, a liquid was found with which Nehemiah and his people had burned the sacrifices, the king, after verifying the fact, fenced the place off and declared it sacred. To those on whom the king wished to bestow favors he distributed the large revenues he received there. Nehemiah and his companions called the liquid naphthar, meaning purification, but most people named it naphtha.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 2:1-32 NAB-A) :

. Jeremiah Hides the Tent, Ark, and Altar. .

You will find in the records, not only that Jeremiah the prophet ordered the deportees to take some of the aforementioned fire with them, but also that the prophet, in giving them the Torah, admonished them not to forget the commandments of YHWH or be led astray in their thoughts, when seeing the gold and silver idols and their ornaments. With other similar words he urged them not to let the Torah depart from their hearts. The same document also tells how the prophet, following a divine revelation, ordered that the tent and the ark should accompany him and how he went off to the mountain which Moses climbed to see Elohim's inheritance. When Jeremiah arrived there, he found a room in a cave in which he put the tent, the ark, and the altar of incense; then he blocked up the entrance. Some of those who followed him came up intending to mark the path, but they could not find it. When Jeremiah heard of this, he reproved them: "The place is to remain unknown until Elohim gathers his people together again and shows them mercy. Then YHWH will disclose these things, and the glory of YHWH will be seen in the cloud, just as it appeared in the time of Moses and when Solomon prayed that the Place might be gloriously sanctified." It is also related how Solomon in his wisdom offered a sacrifice at the dedication and the completion of the temple. Just as Moses prayed to YHWH and fire descended from the sky and consumed the sacrifices, so Solomon also prayed and fire came down and burned up the holocausts. Moses had said, "Because it had not been eaten, the sin offering was burned up." Solomon also celebrated the feast in the same way for eight days. Besides these things, it is also told in the records and in Nehemiah's Memoirs how he collected the books about the kings, the writings of the prophets and of David, and the royal letters about sacred offerings. In like manner Judas also collected for us the books that had been scattered because of the war, and we now have them in our possession. If you need them, send messengers to get them for you. As we are about to celebrate the feast of the purification of the temple, we are writing to you requesting you also to please celebrate the feast. It is Elohim who has saved all his people and has restored to all of them their heritage, the kingdom, the priesthood, and the sacred rites, as he promised through the Torah. We trust in Elohim, that he will soon have mercy on us and gather us together from everywhere under the heavens to his holy Place, for he has rescued us from great perils and has purified his Place.

. The Compiler's Preface. .

This is the story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, of the purification of the great temple, the dedication of the altar, the campaigns against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, and of the heavenly manifestations accorded to the heroes who fought bravely for Judaism, so that, few as they were, they seized the whole land, put to flight the barbarian hordes, regained possession of the world-famous temple, liberated the city, and reestablished the Torah that were in danger of being abolished, while YHWH favored them with all his generous assistance. All this, which Jason of Cyrene set forth in detail in five volumes, we will try to condense into a single book. In view of the flood of statistics, and the difficulties encountered by those who wish to plunge into historical narratives where the material is abundant, we have aimed to please those who prefer simple reading, as well as to make it easy for the studious who wish to commit things to memory, and to be helpful to all. For us who have taken upon ourselves the labor of making this digest, the task, far from being easy, is one of sweat and of sleepless nights, just as the preparation of a festive banquet is no light matter for one who thus seeks to

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give enjoyment to others. Similarly, to win the gratitude of many we will gladly endure these inconveniences, while we leave the responsibility for exact details to the original author, and confine our efforts to giving only a summary outline. As the architect of a new house must give his attention to the whole structure, while the man who undertakes the decoration and the frescoes has only to concern himself with what is needed for ornamentation, so I think it is with us. To enter into questions and examine them thoroughly from all sides is the task of the professional historian; but the man who is making an adaptation should be allowed to aim at brevity of expression and to omit detailed treatment of the matter. Here, then, we shall begin our account without further ado; it would be nonsense to write a long preface to a story and then abbreviate the story itself.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 3:1-40 NAB-A) :

. Arrival of Heliodorus in Jerusalem. .

While the holy city lived in perfect peace and the Torah were strictly observed because of the piety of the high priest Onias and his hatred of evil, the kings themselves honored the Place and glorified the temple with the most magnificent gifts. Thus Seleucus, king of Asia, defrayed from his own revenues all the expenses necessary for the sacrificial services. But a certain Simon, of the priestly course of Bilgah, who had been appointed superintendent of the temple, had a quarrel with the high priest about the supervision of the city market. Since he could not prevail against Onias, he went to Apollonius of Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and reported to him that the treasury in Jerusalem was so full of untold riches that the total sum of money was incalculable and out of all proportion to the cost of the sacrifices, and that it would be possible to bring it all under the control of the king. When Apollonius had an audience with the king, he informed him about the riches that had been reported to him. The king chose his minister Heliodorus and sent him with instructions to expropriate the aforesaid wealth. So Heliodorus immediately set out on his journey, ostensibly to visit the cities of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, but in reality to carry out the king's purpose. When he arrived in Jerusalem and had been graciously received by the high priest of the city, he told him about the information that had been given, and explained the reason for his presence, and he asked if these things were really true. The high priest explained that part of the money was a care fund for widows and orphans, and a part was the property of Hyrcanus, son of Tobias, a man who occupied a very high position. Contrary to the calumnies of the impious Simon, the total amounted to four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. He added that it was utterly unthinkable to defraud those who had placed their trust in the sanctity of the Place and in the sacred inviolability of a temple venerated all over the world.

. Heliodorus Plans to Rob the Temple. .

But because of the orders he had from the king, Heliodorus said that in any case the money must be confiscated for the royal treasury. So on the day he had set he went in to take an inventory of the funds. There was great distress throughout the city. Priests prostrated themselves in their priestly robes before the altar, and loudly begged him in heaven who had given the Torah about deposits to keep the deposits safe for those who had made them. Whoever saw the appearance of the high priest was pierced to the heart, for the changed color of his face manifested the anguish of his soul. The terror and bodily trembling that had come over the man clearly showed those who saw him the pain that lodged in his heart. People rushed out of their houses in crowds to make public supplication, because the Place was in danger of being profaned. Women, girded with sackcloth below their breasts, filled the streets; maidens secluded indoors ran together, some to the gates, some to the walls, others peered through the windows, all of them with hands raised toward heaven, making supplication. It was pitiful to see the populace variously prostrated in prayer and the high priest full of dread and anguish.

. YHWH Protects His Temple. .

While they were imploring the almighty YHWH to keep the deposits safe and secure for those who had placed them in trust, Heliodorus went on with his plan. But just as he was approaching the treasury with his bodyguards, YHWH of spirits who holds all power

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manifested himself in so striking a way that those who had been bold enough to follow Heliodorus were panic-stricken at Elohim's power and fainted away in terror. There appeared to them a richly caparisoned horse, mounted by a dreadful rider. Charging furiously, the horse attacked Heliodorus with its front hoofs. The rider was seen to be wearing golden armor. Then two other young men, remarkably strong, strikingly beautiful, and splendidly attired, appeared before him. Standing on each side of him, they flogged him unceasingly until they had given him innumerable blows. Suddenly he fell to the ground, enveloped in great darkness. Men picked him up and laid him on a stretcher. The man who a moment before had entered that treasury with a great retinue and his whole bodyguard was carried away helpless, having clearly experienced the sovereign power of Elohim.

. Onias Prays for Heliodorus. .

While he lay speechless and deprived of all hope of aid, due to an act of Elohim's power, the Jews praised YHWH who had marvelously glorified his holy Place; and the temple, charged so shortly before with fear and commotion, was filled with joy and gladness, now that the almighty YHWH had manifested himself. Soon some of the companions of Heliodorus begged Onias to invoke the Most High, praying that the life of the man who was about to expire might be spared. Fearing that the king might think that Heliodorus had suffered some foul play at the hands of the Jews, the high priest offered a sacrifice for the man's recovery. While the high priest was offering the sacrifice of atonement, the same young men in the same clothing again appeared and stood before Heliodorus. "Be very grateful to the high priest Onias," they told him. "It is for his sake that YHWH has spared your life. Since you have been scourged by Heaven, proclaim to all men the majesty of Elohim's power." When they had said this, they disappeared.

. The Conversion of Heliodorus. .

After Heliodorus had offered a sacrifice to YHWH and made most solemn vows to him who had spared his life, he bade Onias farewell, and returned with his soldiers to the king. Before all men he gave witness to the deeds of the most high Elohim that he had seen with his own eyes. When the king asked Heliodorus who would be a suitable man to be sent to Jerusalem next, he answered: "If you have an enemy or a plotter against the government, send him there, and you will receive him back well-flogged, if indeed he survives at all; for there is certainly some special divine power about the Place. He who has his dwelling in heaven watches over that Place and protects it, and he strikes down and destroys those who come to harm it." This was how the matter concerning Heliodorus and the preservation of the treasury turned out.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 4:1-50 NAB-A) :

. Simon Accuses Onias. .

The Simon mentioned above as the informer about the funds against his own country, made false accusation that it was Onias who threatened Heliodorus and instigated the whole miserable affair. He dared to brand as a plotter against the government the man who was a benefactor of the city, a protector of his compatriots, and a zealous defender of the Torah. When Simon's hostility reached such a point that murders were being committed by one of his henchmen, Onias saw that the opposition was serious and that Apollonius, son of Menestheus, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, was abetting Simon's wickedness. So he had recourse to the king, not as an accuser of his countrymen, but as a man looking to the general and particular good of all the people. He saw that, unless the king intervened, it would be impossible to have a peaceful government, and that Simon would not desist from his folly.

. Jason's Reforms. .

But Seleucus died, and when Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes succeeded him on the throne, Onias' brother Jason obtained the high priesthood by corrupt means: in an interview, he promised the king three hundred and sixty talents of silver, as well as eighty talents from another source of income. Besides this he agreed to pay a hundred and fifty more, if he were given authority to establish a gymnasium and a youth club for it and to enroll men in Jerusalem as Antiochians. When Jason received the king's approval and came into office, he immediately initiated his countrymen into the Greek way of life. He set aside the royal concessions granted to the Jews through the mediation of John, father of Eupolemus (that Eupolemus who would later go on an embassy to the Romans to establish a treaty of friendship with them); he abrogated the lawful institutions and introduced customs contrary to the Torah. He quickly established a gymnasium at the very foot of the acropolis, where he induced the noblest young men to wear the Greek hat. The craze for Hellenism and foreign customs reached such a pitch, through the outrageous wickedness of the ungodly pseudo-high-priest Jason, that the priests no longer cared about the service of the altar. Disdaining the temple and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened, at the signal for the discus-throwing, to take part in the unlawful exercises on the athletic field. They despised what their ancestors had regarded as honors, while they highly prized what the Greeks esteemed as glory. Precisely because of this, they found themselves in serious trouble: the very people whose manner of life they emulated, and whom they desired to imitate in everything, became their enemies and oppressors. It is no light matter to flout the Torah of Elohim, as the following period will show.

. Jason Introduces Greek Customs. .

When the quinquennial games were held at Tyre in the presence of the king, the vile Jason sent envoys as representatives of the Antiochians of Jerusalem, to bring there three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Hercules. But the bearers themselves decided that the money should not be spent on a sacrifice, as that was not right, but should be used for some other purpose. So the contribution destined by the sender for the sacrifice to Hercules was in fact applied, by those who brought it, to the construction of triremes. When Apollonius, son of Menestheus, was sent to Egypt for the coronation of King Philometor, Antiochus learned that the king was opposed to his policies; so he

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took measures for his own security. After going to Joppa, he proceeded to Jerusalem. There he was received with great pomp by Jason and the people of the city, who escorted him with torchlights and acclamations; following this, he led his army into Phoenicia.

. Menelaus Becomes High Priest. .

Three years later Jason sent Menelaus, brother of the aforementioned Simon, to deliver the money to the king, and to obtain decisions on some important matters. When he had been introduced to the king, he flattered him with such an air of authority that he secured the high priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver. He returned with the royal commission, but with nothing that made him worthy of the high priesthood; he had the temper of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a wild beast. Then Jason, who had cheated his own brother and now saw himself cheated by another man, was driven out as a fugitive to the country of the Ammonites. Although Menelaus had obtained the office, he did not make any payments of the money he had promised to the king, in spite of the demand of Sostratus, the commandant of the citadel, whose duty it was to collect the taxes. For this reason, both were summoned before the king. Menelaus left his brother Lysimachus as his substitute in the high priesthood, while Sostratus left Crates, commander of the Cypriots, as his substitute.

. The Murder of Onias. .

While these things were taking place, the people of Tarsus and Mallus rose in revolt, because their cities had been given as a gift to Antiochis, the king's mistress. The king, therefore, went off in haste to settle the affair, leaving Andronicus, one of his nobles, as his deputy. Then Menelaus, thinking this a good opportunity, stole some gold vessels from the temple and presented them to Andronicus; he had already sold some other vessels in Tyre and in the neighboring cities. When Onias had clear evidence of the facts, he made a public protest, after withdrawing to the inviolable sanctuary at Daphne, near Antioch. Thereupon Menelaus approached Andronicus privately and asked him to lay hands on Onias. So Andronicus went to Onias, and by treacherously reassuring him through sworn pledges with right hands joined, persuaded him, in spite of his suspicions, to leave the sanctuary. Then, without any regard for justice, he immediately put him to death.

. Andronicus Is Punished. .

As a result, not only the Jews, but many people of other nations as well, were indignant and angry over the unjust murder of the man. When the king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Jews of the city, together with the Greeks who detested the crime, went to see him about the murder of Onias. Antiochus was deeply grieved and full of pity; he wept as he recalled the prudence and noble conduct of the deceased. Inflamed with anger, he immediately stripped Andronicus of his purple robe, tore off his other garments, and had him led through the whole city to the very place where he had committed the outrage against Onias; and there he put the murderer to death. Thus YHWH rendered him the punishment he deserved.

. Unpopularity of Lysimachus and Menelaus. .

Many sacrilegious thefts had been committed by Lysimachus in the city with the connivance of Menelaus. When word was spread that a large number of gold vessels had

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been stolen, the people assembled in protest against Lysimachus. As the crowds, now thoroughly enraged, began to riot, Lysimachus launched an unjustified attack against them with about three thousand armed men under the leadership of Auranus, a man as advanced in folly as he was in years. Reacting against Lysimachus' attack, the people picked up stones or pieces of wood or handfuls of the ashes lying there and threw them in wild confusion at Lysimachus and his men. As a result, they wounded many of them and even killed a few, while they put all the rest to flight. The sacrilegious thief himself they slew near the treasury. Charges about this affair were brought against Menelaus. When the king came to Tyre, three men sent by the senate presented to him the justice of their cause. But Menelaus, seeing himself on the losing side, promised Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, a substantial sum of money if he would win the king over. So Ptolemy retired with the king under a colonnade, as if to get some fresh air, and persuaded him to change his mind. Menelaus, who was the cause of all the trouble, the king acquitted of the charges, while he condemned to death those poor men who would have been declared innocent even if they had pleaded their case before Scythians. Thus, those who had prosecuted the case for the city, for the people, and for the sacred vessels, quickly suffered unjust punishment. For this reason, even some Tyrians were indignant over the crime and provided sumptuously for their burial. But Menelaus, thanks to the covetousness of the men in power, remained in office, where he grew in wickedness and became the chief plotter against his fellow citizens.

!! End of The Chapter.