

FEASTS (Moedim): Chanukah Seven: 7 Candles (Feast of Dedication).

Chanukah Seven: 7 Candles (Feast of Dedication); 30-Kislev.

Chunukah 7:

Numbers 7:48-59.

48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim
49 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;
50 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
51 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
52 one male goat for a sin offering;
53 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 Elishama the son of Ammihud.
54 On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh
55 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;
56 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
57 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
58 one male goat for a sin offering;
59 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 Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

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(2 Maccabees 9:1-29 NAB-A) :

. The Last Campaign of Antiochus Epiphanes. .

Death of Antiochus. About that time Antiochus retreated in disgrace from the region of Persia. He had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temple and gain control of the city. Thereupon the people had swift recourse to arms, and Antiochus' men were routed, so that in the end Antiochus was put to flight by the natives and forced to beat a shameful retreat. On his arrival in Ecbatana, he learned what had happened to Nicanor and to Timothy's forces. Overcome with anger, he planned to make the Jews suffer for the injury done by those who had put him to flight. Therefore he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping until he finished the journey. Yet the condemnation of Heaven rode with him, since he said in his arrogance, "I will make Jerusalem the common graveyard of the Jews as soon as I arrive there." So the all-seeing YHWH, the Elohim of Israel, struck him down with an unseen but incurable blow; for scarcely had he uttered those words when he was seized with excruciating pains in his bowels and sharp internal torment, a fit punishment for him who had tortured the bowels of others with many barbarous torments. Far from giving up his insolence, he was all the more filled with arrogance. Breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, he gave orders to drive even faster. As a result he hurtled from the dashing chariot, and every part of his body was racked by the violent fall. Thus he who previously, in his superhuman presumption, thought he could command the waves of the sea, and imagined he could weigh the mountaintops in his scales, was now thrown to the ground and had to be carried on a litter, clearly manifesting to all the power of Elohim. The body of this impious man swarmed with worms, and while he was still alive in hideous torments, his flesh rotted off, so that the entire army was sickened by the stench of his corruption. Shortly before, he had thought that he could reach the stars of heaven, and now, no one could endure to transport the man because of this intolerable stench. At last, broken in spirit, he began to give up his excessive arrogance, and to gain some understanding, under the scourge of Elohim, for he was racked with pain unceasingly. When he could no longer bear his own stench, he said, "It is right to be subject to Elohim, and not to think one's mortal self divine."

. Antiochus Makes a Promise to Elohim. .

Then this vile man vowed to YHWH, who would no longer have mercy on him, that he would set free the holy city, toward which he had been hurrying with the intention of leveling it to the ground and making it a common graveyard; he would put on perfect equality with the Athenians all the Jews, whom he had judged not even worthy of burial, but fit only to be thrown out with their children to be eaten by vultures and wild animals; he would adorn with the finest offerings the holy temple which he had previously despoiled; he would restore all the sacred vessels many times over; and would provide from his own revenues the expenses required for the sacrifices. Besides all this, he would become a Jew himself and visit every inhabited place to proclaim there the power of Elohim. But since Elohim's punishment had justly come upon him, his sufferings were not lessened, so he lost hope for himself and wrote the following letter to the Jews in the form of a supplication. It read thus: Death of Antiochus

. Antiochus's Letter and Death. .

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"To my esteemed Jewish citizens, Antiochus, their king and general, sends hearty greetings and best wishes for their health and happiness. If you and your children are well and your affairs are going as you wish, I thank Elohim very much, for my hopes are in heaven. Now that I am ill, I recall with affection the esteem and good will you bear me. On returning from the regions of Persia, I fell victim to a troublesome illness; so I thought it necessary to form plans for the general welfare of all. Actually, I do not despair about my health, since I have great hopes of recovering from my illness. Nevertheless, I know that my father, whenever he went on campaigns in the hinterland, would name his successor, so that, if anything unexpected happened or any unwelcome news came, the people throughout the realm would know to whom the government had been entrusted, and so not be disturbed. I am also bearing in mind that the neighboring rulers, especially those on the borders of our kingdom, are on the watch for opportunities and waiting to see what will happen. I have therefore appointed as king my son Antiochus, whom I have often before entrusted and commended to most of you, when I made hurried visits to the outlying provinces. I have written to him the letter copied below. Therefore I beg and entreat each of you to remember the general and individual benefits you have received, and to continue to show good will toward me and my son. I am confident that, following my policy, he will treat you with mildness and kindness in his relations with you." So this murderer and blasphemer, after extreme sufferings, such as he had inflicted on others, died a miserable death in the mountains of a foreign land. His foster brother Philip brought the body home; but fearing Antiochus' son, he later withdrew into Egypt, to Ptolemy Philometor.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 10:1-38 NAB-A) :

. Purification of the Temple. .

When Maccabeus and his companions, under YHWH's leadership, had recovered the temple and the city, they destroyed the altars erected by the Gentiles in the marketplace and the sacred enclosures. After purifying the temple, they made a new altar. Then, with fire struck from flint, they offered sacrifice for the first time in two years, burned incense, and lighted lamps. They also set out the showbread. When they had done this, they prostrated themselves and begged YHWH that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, and that if they should sin at any time, he might chastise them with moderation and not hand them over to blasphemous and barbarous Gentiles. On the anniversary of the day on which the temple had been profaned by the Gentiles, that is, the twenty-fifth of the same month Chislew, the purification of the temple took place. The Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Booths, remembering how, a little while before, they had spent the feast of Booths living like wild animals in caves on the mountains. Carrying rods entwined with leaves, green branches and palms, they sang hymns of grateful praise to him who had brought about the purification of his own Place. By public edict and decree they prescribed that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these days every year. Such was the end of Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes.

. Accession of Antiochus Eupator. .

Now we shall relate what happened under Antiochus Eupator, the son of that godless man, and shall give a summary of the chief evils caused by the wars. When Eupator succeeded to the kingdom, he put a certain Lysias in charge of the government as commander-in-chief of Coelesyria and Phoenicia. Ptolemy, surnamed Macron, had taken the lead in treating the Jews fairly because of the previous injustice that had been done them, and he endeavored to have peaceful relations with them. As a result, he was accused before Eupator by the King's Friends. In fact, on all sides he heard himself called a traitor for having abandoned Cyprus, which Philometor had entrusted to him, and for having gone over to Antiochus Epiphanes. Since he could not command the respect due to his high office, he ended his life by taking poison.

. Campaign in Idumea. .

When Gorgias became governor of the region, he employed foreign troops and used every opportunity to attack the Jews. At the same time the Idumeans, who held some important strongholds, were harassing the Jews; they welcomed fugitives from Jerusalem and endeavored to continue the war. Maccabeus and his companions, after public prayers asking Elohim to be their ally, moved quickly against the strongholds of the Idumeans. Attacking vigorously, they gained control of the places, drove back all who manned the walls, and cut down those who opposed them, killing as many as twenty thousand men. When at least nine thousand took refuge in two very strong towers, containing everything necessary to sustain a siege, Maccabeus left Simon and Joseph, along with Zacchaeus and his men, in sufficient numbers to besiege them, while he himself went off to places where he was more urgently needed. But some of the men in Simon's force who were money lovers let themselves be bribed by some of the men in the towers; on receiving seventy thousand drachmas, they allowed a number of them to escape. When Maccabeus was told what had happened, he assembled the rulers of the people and accused those men of having sold their kinsmen for money by setting their

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enemies free to fight against them. So he put them to death as traitors, and without delay captured the two towers. As he was successful at arms in all his undertakings, he destroyed more than twenty thousand men in the two strongholds.

.Judas Defeats Timothy..

Timothy, who had previously been defeated by the Jews, gathered a tremendous force of foreign troops and collected a large number of cavalry from Asia; then he appeared in Judea, ready to conquer it by force. At his approach, Maccabeus and his men made supplication to Elohim, sprinkling earth upon their heads and girding their loins in sackcloth. Lying prostrate at the foot of the altar, they begged him to be gracious to them, and to be an enemy to their enemies, and a foe to their foes, as the Torah declares. After the prayer, they took up their arms and advanced a considerable distance from the city, halting when they were close to the enemy. As soon as dawn broke, the armies joined battle, the one having as pledge of success and victory not only their valor but also their reliance on YHWH, and the other taking fury as their leader in the fight. In the midst of the fierce battle, there appeared to the enemy from the heavens five majestic men riding on golden-bridled horses, who led the Jews on. They surrounded Maccabeus, and shielding him with their own armor, kept him from being wounded. They shot arrows and hurled thunderbolts at the enemy, who were bewildered and blinded, thrown into confusion and routed. Twenty-five hundred of their foot soldiers and six hundred of their horsemen were slain. Timothy, however, fled to a well-fortified stronghold called Gazara, where Chaereas was in command. For four days Maccabeus and his men eagerly besieged the fortress. Those inside, relying on the strength of the place, kept repeating outrageous blasphemies and uttering abominable words. When the fifth day dawned, twenty young men in the army of Maccabeus, angered over such blasphemies, bravely stormed the wall and with savage fury cut down everyone they encountered. Others who climbed up the same way swung around on the defenders, taking the besieged in the rear; they put the towers to the torch, spread the fire and burned the blasphemers alive. Still others broke down the gates and let in the rest of the troops, who took possession of the city. Timothy had hidden in a cistern, but they killed him, along with his brother Chaereas, and Apollophanes. On completing these exploits, they blessed, with hymns of grateful praise, YHWH who shows great kindness to Israel and grants them victory.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 11:1-38 NAB-A) :

. Lysias Besieges Beth-zur. .

Very soon afterward, Lysias, guardian and kinsman of the king and head of the government, being greatly displeased at what had happened, mustered about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry and marched against the Jews. His plan was to make Jerusalem a Greek settlement; to levy tribute on the temple, as he did on the sanctuaries of the other nations; and to put the high priesthood up for sale every year. He did not take Elohim's power into account at all, but felt exultant confidence in his myriads of foot soldiers, his thousands of horsemen, and his eighty elephants. So he invaded Judea, and when he reached Beth-zur, a fortified place about twenty miles from Jerusalem, launched a strong attack against it. When Maccabeus and his men learned that Lysias was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people begged YHWH with lamentations and tears to send a good angel to save Israel. Maccabeus himself was the first to take up arms, and he exhorted the others to join him in risking their lives to help their kinsmen. Then they resolutely set out together. Suddenly, while they were still near Jerusalem, a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white garments and brandishing gold weapons. Then all of them together thanked Elohim for his mercy, and their hearts were filled with such courage that they were ready to assault not only men, but the most savage beasts, yes, even walls of iron. Now that YHWH had shown his mercy toward them, they advanced in battle order with the aid of their heavenly ally. Hurling themselves upon the enemy like lions, they laid low eleven thousand foot soldiers and sixteen hundred horsemen, and put all the rest to flight. Most of those who got away were wounded and stripped of their arms, while Lysias himself escaped only by shameful flight.

. Lysias Makes Peace with the Jews. .

But Lysias was not a stupid man. He reflected on the defeat he had suffered, and came to realize that the Hebrews were invincible because the mighty Elohim was their ally. He therefore sent a message persuading them to settle everything on just terms, and promising to persuade the king also, and to induce him to become their friend. Maccabeus, solicitous for the common good, agreed to all that Lysias proposed; and the king, on his part, granted in behalf of the Jews all the written requests of Maccabeus to Lysias. These are the terms of the letter which Lysias wrote to the Jews: "Lysias sends greetings to the Jewish people. John and Absalom, your envoys, have presented your signed communication and asked about the matters contained in it. Whatever had to be referred to the king I called to his attention, and the things that were acceptable he has granted. If you maintain your loyalty to the government, I will endeavor to further your interests in the future. On the details of these matters I have authorized my representatives, as well as your envoys, to confer with you. Farewell." The year one hundred and forty-eight, the twenty-fourth of Dioscorinthius. The king's letter read thus: "King Antiochus sends greetings to his brother Lysias. Now that our father has taken his place among the idol_gods, we wish the subjects of our kingdom to be undisturbed in conducting their own affairs. We understand that the Jews do not agree with our father's policy concerning Greek customs but prefer their own way of life. They are petitioning us to let them retain their own customs. Since we desire that this people too should be undisturbed, our decision is that their temple be restored to them and that they live in keeping with the customs of their ancestors. Accordingly, please send them messengers to give them our assurances of friendship, so that, when they learn of our decision, they

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may have nothing to worry about but may contentedly go about their own business." The king's letter to the people was as follows: "King Antiochus sends greetings to the Jewish senate and to the rest of the Jews. If you are well, it is what we desire. We too are in good health. Menelaus has told us of your wish to return home and attend to your own affairs. Therefore, those who return by the thirtieth of Xanthicus will have our assurance of full permission to observe their dietary Torah and other Torah, just as before, and none of the Jews shall be molested in any way for faults committed through ignorance. I have also sent Menelaus to reassure you. Farewell." In the year one hundred and forty-eight, the fifteenth of Xanthicus. The Romans also sent them a letter as follows: "Quintus Memmius and Titus Manius, legates of the Romans, send greetings to the Jewish people. Whatever Lysias, kinsman of the king, has granted you, we also approve. But the matters on which he passed judgment should be submitted to the king. As soon as you have considered them, send someone to us with your decisions so that we may present them to your advantage, for we are on our way to Antioch. Make haste, then, to send us those who can inform us of your intentions. Farewell." In the year one hundred and forty-eight, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.

!! End of The Chapter.

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(2 Maccabees 12:1-46 NAB-A) :

. Incidents at Joppa and Jamnia. .

After these agreements were made, Lysias returned to the king, and the Jews went about their farming. But some of the local governors, Timothy and Apollonius, son of Gennaesus, as also Hieronymus and Demophon, to say nothing of Nicanor, the commander of the Cyprians, would not allow them to live in peace. Some people of Joppa also committed this outrage: they invited the Jews who lived among them, together with their wives and children, to embark on boats which they had provided. There was no hint of enmity toward them; this was done by public vote of the city. When the Jews, not suspecting treachery and wishing to live on friendly terms, accepted the invitation, the people of Joppa took them out to sea and drowned at least two hundred of them. As soon as Judas heard of the barbarous deed perpetrated against his countrymen, he summoned his men; and after calling upon Elohim, the just judge, he marched against the murderers of his kinsmen. In a night attack he set the harbor on fire, burnt the boats, and put to the sword those who had taken refuge there. When the gates of the town were shut, he withdrew, intending to come back later and wipe out the entire population of Joppa. On hearing that the men of Jamnia planned to give like treatment to the Jews who lived among them, he attacked the Jamnian populace by night, setting fire to the harbor and the fleet, so that the glow of the flames was visible as far as Jerusalem, thirty miles away.

. The Campaign in Gilead. .

When the Jews had gone about a mile from there in the campaign against Timothy, they were attacked by Arabs numbering at least five thousand foot soldiers, and five hundred horsemen. After a hard fight, Judas and his companions, with Elohim's help, were victorious. The defeated nomads begged Judas to make friends with them and promised to supply the Jews with cattle and to help them in every other way. Realizing that they could indeed be useful in many respects, Judas agreed to make peace with them. After the pledge of friendship had been exchanged, the Arabs withdrew to their tents. He also attacked a certain city called Caspin, fortified with earthworks and ramparts and inhabited by a mixed population of Gentiles. Relying on the strength of their walls and their supply of provisions, the besieged treated Judas and his men with contempt, insulting them and even uttering blasphemies and profanity. But Judas and his men invoked the aid of the great Sovereign of the world, who, in the day of Joshua, overthrew Jericho without battering-ram or siege machine; then they furiously stormed the ramparts. Capturing the city by the will of Elohim, they inflicted such indescribable slaughter on it that the adjacent pool, which was about a quarter of a mile wide, seemed to be filled with the blood that flowed into it.

. Judas Defeats Timothy's Army. .

When they had gone on some ninety miles, they reached Charax, where there were certain Jews known as Toubiani. But they did not find Timothy in that region, for he had already departed from there without having done anything except to leave behind in one place a very strong garrison. But Dositheus and Sosipater, two of Maccabeus' captains, marched out and destroyed the force of more than ten thousand men that Timothy had left in the stronghold. Meanwhile, Maccabeus divided his army into cohorts, with a commander over each cohort, and went in pursuit of Timothy, who had a force of a

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hundred and twenty thousand foot soldiers and twenty-five hundred horsemen. When Timothy learned of the approach of Judas, he sent on ahead of him the women and children, as well as the baggage, to a place called Karnion, which was hard to besiege and even hard to reach because of the difficult terrain of that region. But when Judas' first cohort appeared, the enemy was overwhelmed with fear and terror at the manifestation of the All-seeing. Scattering in every direction, they rushed away in such headlong flight that in many cases they wounded one another, pierced by the swords of their own men. Judas pressed the pursuit vigorously, putting the sinners to the sword and destroying as many as thirty thousand men. Timothy himself fell into the hands of the men under Dositheus and Sosipater; but with great cunning, he asked them to spare his life and let him go, because he had in his power the parents and relatives of many of them, and could make these suffer. When he had fully confirmed his solemn pledge to restore them unharmed, they let him go for the sake of saving their brethren.

. Judas Wins Other Victories. .

Judas then marched to Karnion and the shrine of Atargatis, where he killed twenty-five thousand people. After the defeat and destruction of these, he moved his army to Ephron, a fortified city inhabited by people of many nationalities. Robust young men took up their posts in defense of the walls, from which they fought valiantly; inside were large supplies of machines and missiles. But the Jews, invoking the Sovereign who forcibly shatters the might of his enemies, got possession of the city and slaughtered twenty-five thousand of the people in it. Then they set out from there and hastened on to Scythopolis, seventy-five miles from Jerusalem. But when the Jews who lived there testified to the good will shown by the Scythopolitans and to their kind treatment even in times of adversity, Judas and his men thanked them and exhorted them to be well disposed to their race in the future also. Finally they arrived in Jerusalem, shortly before the feast of Weeks.

. Judas Defeats Gorgias. .

After this feast called Pentecost, they lost no time in marching against Gorgias, governor of Idumea, who opposed them with three thousand foot soldiers and four hundred horsemen. In the ensuing battle, a few of the Jews were slain. A man called Dositheus, a powerful horseman and one of Bacenor's men, caught hold of Gorgias, grasped his military cloak and dragged him along by main strength, intending to capture the vile wretch alive, when a Thracian horseman attacked Dositheus and cut off his arm at the shoulder. Then Gorgias fled to Marisa. After Esdris and his men had been fighting for a long time and were weary, Judas called upon YHWH to show himself their ally and leader in the battle. Then, raising a battle cry in his ancestral language, and with songs, he charged Gorgias' men when they were not expecting it and put them to flight.

. Prayers for Those Killed in Battle. .

Judas rallied his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the week was ending, they purified themselves according to custom and kept the sabbath there. On the following day, since the task had now become urgent, Judas and his men went to gather up the bodies of the slain and bury them with their kinsmen in their ancestral tombs. But under the tunic of each of the dead they found amulets sacred to the idols of Jamnia, which the Torah forbids the Jews to wear. So it was clear to all that this was why these men had been slain. They all therefore praised the ways of YHWH, the just judge who brings to

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light the things that are hidden. Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Judas warned the soldiers to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

!! End of The Chapter.

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