

Hanukkah
The Festival of Lights
How to Bring Light into your Life
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Hanukkah is a wonderful time of the year; it is a time where we decorate our homes with lights and flowers and a host of many other things. Things that bring joy to our hearts and let all people know, that we, the people that live in this house, believe in, and celebrate Hanukkah, and **NOT** the pagan holiday that are normally celebrated at this time of the year. It is a time where we prepare a lot of good and scrumptious food and invite family and friends over to our house to spend some time together. In our small congregation, the majority of us choose to fellowship together for the full eight days of Hanukkah. At those gatherings we read the Word of Elohim for about half an hour or so and then we eat and drink and enjoy the whole evening of fellowship, playing some games and talking about what Yahweh has done and is doing in our lives. We have even come to understand and cherish this time as a time of purification and sanctification, a time of rededicating our own personal temples, the temple that in the beginning was meant to be the original resting place for Elohim.

But are we doing what we should be doing or are we just satisfying a need to be righteous because of our newly found Hebraic roots and beliefs. Are we bringing man's ways into the celebration of the **Dedication of our temple, the temple that has been made without hands?** Are we in danger of doing to Hanukkah what the majority of the rest of the people of the world have done to Christmas? And that is, Commercializing it, and making it irrelevant. I know that Christmas **IS NOT A BIBLICAL FEAST, BUT** most of our Christian brethren **BELIEVE THAT IT IS**, and **STILL**, they have allowed the pollution of the world to come into it, and in some cases, they have even embraced and applauded some of these changes.

Only your heart can determine whether or not you have done that, for in and of themselves, there is nothing wrong with the traditions of decorating your house with lights, and giving gifts and rejoicing in the spirit of the season, so long as we view them for what they really are, and that **IS MAN MADE TRADITIONS**. We must understand, that we cannot come and worship our heavenly Father with man made traditions, for these pagan traditions are as Filthy Rags to Him, and the Creator of the universe cannot be worshipped with Filthy Rags, for they are an abomination to Him. The Creator of the universe, **MUST** be worshipped in **SPIRIT** and in **TRUTH**, and the word **TRUTH** in Scripture is defined as, the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life, (*Psalm 119:142*).

Based on this Scriptural **TRUTH**, it means that **WE, YOU AND I, ARE** the only ones, that can decide whether the traditions that we are upholding have become so important to us that they **TAKE** president over our love for our heavenly Father who has emphatically stated, **IF** you Love Me, **THEN KEEP and DO** My Commandments. Our hearts must remain true to Him and only Him, and we must be prepared at any time, to **DROP OFF, ALL OF THESE TRADITIONS IF CALLED UPON BY YAHWEH TO DO SO**.

This morning, my thoughts wandered to what it must have been like on Hanukkah, the rededication of the Temple of Yahweh, after the Maccabees defeated Antiochus, and how far Yahweh's people have deviated from that Hanukkah celebration, the dedication of the physical temple and its altar?

I thought about the leader that was in place at the time of this **rebellious act** against Yahweh and His Temple, the Place where Yahweh said He would place His Name there forever, and how he, the leader of the people, was a tyrant that effectively imposed **his will** upon all the people, including the people of Elohim. Furthermore, I thought of how the majority of the people, especially the people of Elohim that **went along** with this Tyrant's decrees, just so that they would **FIT INTO THIS NEW SOCIETY**. I thought of how they allowed the Word of Elohim and the Place where Yahweh had chosen to place His Name **FOREVER**, to be desecrated and blasphemed day by day, and said nothing. Then, I thought of the so called houses of the Elohim of Abraham, Yitzchaq and Ya'aqov of today, and how I believe that the very same thing that happened under the authority of Antiochus, the Greek Despot, **IS** happening today. Are **NOT** these so called houses of Elohim, that would be, Christianity, Catholicism and Judaism, are actually **copying and mimicking** the ungodly ways of the world, by bringing a lot of the world's ways into the houses of Elohim? Are not the people of the so called houses of Elohim, somehow forced by their self appointed leaders, **to accept and even applaud** abortion, homosexuality, transgenderism, and many of the other man made religion's beliefs, and a plethora of abominations into their so called houses of worship, the so called houses of Elohim, and they do it all in the name of tolerance?

Are we so different today, **do we not compromise our lives** at the altar of political correctness? Do we not have the mindset of, Let's not offend people, or let's not rock the boat for fear of being classified as a cult, or self-righteous, or renegades, homophobic, or an Islamophobe or a religious zealot?

By giving into these pressures, have we **NOT** also set up our own **IDOL or GRAVEN IMAGE** to the god called **political correctness** and **his minions called tolerance**? Are we not also sacrificing swine (abominations) on Yahweh's sacred altar, when we give in to that pressure? Are we not truly adding to and or taking things away from the Word of Yahweh when we sacrifice His Biblical principals and beliefs, **in favour of political correctness**? Are we going to put **the fear of offending people AHEAD OF, ELOHIM'S TRUTH**, the Words of His Torah, simply because we want to belong to or fit in to this society that does **NOT** honour **NOR** obey the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah, just so we do not offend people that do not believe as we do, or upset the political leaders, who have, long ago, for the most part, abandoned the Ways and the Words of Yahweh, or do we feel compelled to give in to the demands of tolerance, by the religious leaders of the plethora of different man made religions, in this world of ours, whose beliefs do not align with ours?

- We are told that we must be tolerant of all societies and their practices, when Yahweh **SAYS** that we are to hate Sin, hate Torah transgressions.
- We are told that we should accept **ALL** lifestyle choices, when Elohim tells us that **ALL FORMS** of homosexuality, perverseness and lasciviousness are an abomination to Him.
- We are told that we must accept those of different ethnic, political and religious beliefs, when Yahweh has told us that **HE IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE**.
- We are told that by being tolerant, we will be able to get more people in the pews of our Churches, and thereby convert many. That may be well and true, **BUT WHAT ARE WE CONVERTING THEM TO?**

At the time of the Maccabee's Hanukkah or rededication of the temple in Jerusalem, there lived a man that **DIDN'T BELIEVE in tolerance, or political correctness, or man made sexual deviation** and call it orientation, nor for anything that contravened the Word of Elohim, and he did **NOT BOW DOWN** to anyone except to the Elohim of Abraham, Yitzchaq and Ya'aqov.

We are told that this man, Mattathias, mounted a revolt against the tyrants of his day and that his five adult sons, along with other people, followed him in this revolt. Mattathias is credited with instilling in his children such qualities as, **COURAGE, HONESTY, RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE, MERCY AND A ZEAL FOR YAHWEH'S TRUTH, THE WORDS OF YAHWEH'S TORAH OF LIFE**. In other words, Mattathias' sons ate of his *righteous fruit* which contained the seed of Elohim's Word, and Elohim *instilled these qualities in his sons*.

We have seen many leaders over the years, even great leaders and preachers of the bible, where they had sons that did not follow in their father's footsteps, and even some that turned out to be evil, or at least do evil things. You don't have to look very far today, to see the same situation. We have had great evangelists in our day where their sons and or daughters have not followed in their footsteps and some have even rebelled against their fathers. I know that everyone of you here tonight, either knows a pastor personally or at least have heard of a pastor that is estranged from his son or his daughter, and that the lines of communication between them have been severed.

What is it that Mattathias did, that these other leaders did not do? What is it that Mattathias did, that his *five* adult sons would follow him without question? How many of us could make that claim today, that our sons and daughters would follow us without question? Maybe we could get one of our children to follow us, **BUT ALL OF THEM**, I don't think so. The **TRUTH** is, that even within our own group, there are precious few if any, that can make that claim. So what is it, that Mattathias did? The Scriptures say that Mattathias believed in Elohim with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and I believe that Mattathias took it a step further and actually **BELIEVED** Elohim. He **BELIEVED** that the Word of Elohim was the absolute **TRUTH**, and he based his whole life on seeking that **TRUTH**, by first seeking the kingdom of Elohim and His righteousness, and he lived and believed the promise that Elohim had given him, that **IF** he dedicated his life in this quest for Elohim's righteousness, He would find for himself as well as for his children, that the promises of Yahweh **ARE TRUE**. The promise that Mattathias experienced is, **ALL** these other things will be added onto you. This was his creed; there was no room for compromise or political correctness nor for tolerance of anything that contravened the Word of Elohim in his life, no room for anyone or anything that adds to or takes anything away from the Word of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life.

Mattathias believed what Elohim said in *Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will NOT depart from it*. So Mattathias set his life to live by Elohim's standards and Elohim's promises, and he raised his children in the **FEAR** and **KNOWLEDGE OF ELOHIM'S TRUTHS**. He instilled in his children a **LOVE** and a **ZEAL** for the Words of Elohim, a **ZEAL** for His **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, the Words of His Torah of Life, and Elohim did the rest.

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as Yahweh gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but Elohim gave the increase.

Even though you might believe that this is only a New Testament teaching, I know that Elohim's **TRUTH** was from the beginning and His **TRUTH** transcends time, and all **TRUTH** can be found in His character. Because, Mattathias was faithful to Elohim's Word, Elohim was faithful to Mattathias **through His Word**. It was Yahweh that gave the increase to Mattathias and to his sons. Mattathias showed forth the fruit that comes from **ABIDING IN THE VINE** and his children ate of Mattathias' fruit. Within that fruit, **IS** the seed of Elohim which **IS** His Word, and Elohim instilled **courage, zealousness,**

honour, love, grace and mercy in Mattathias' children, and when the time came for the children of Mattathias to exercise these qualities, it was automatic.

It didn't matter that their lives were put at risk, what mattered to them, was that Yahweh's **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, the Words of His Torah of Life be upheld, and that **ZEAL**, for the Word of Yahweh, **IS** what proceeded forth from them. Why was it automatic? It was automatic because Elohim has **PROMISED IT IN HIS WORD**. Furthermore, Scripture tells us that our mouth speaks only according to what **IS EMBEDDED IN OUR HEARTS** and that is exactly what Mattathias' sons did; **THEY ACTED FROM THE HEART**.

I am ashamed to say, that I, as your teacher, cannot make the same claim as Mattathias, for I did **NOT** raise my children in the **FEAR** of Yahweh. For in the Scriptures, in *Psalm 110:10* and *Proverbs 89:10* it says, **THE FEAR OF YAHWEH IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM**, and therefore, since I did **NOT** teach my children the Words of Yahweh's Torah of Life, it means that I, neglected to teach my children Yahweh's **WISDOM**, and therefore I did not raise them in, nor with, the Words of the Torah of our heavenly Father, as Mattathias raised his sons. You would think that once I came to that realization of what I had neglected to do, that I would be totally devastated, and for a while I was, but the love that I have received from my heavenly Father, has come alongside of me, and through His marvellous Word, He has gently instructed me, and said, Marc, that was then, and this is now, Start by living My Word, by making it part of your everyday life, and I promise you, that you and your household will be saved.

There isn't anything on this earth that can compare to the forgiving and encouraging **GRACE** and **MERCY** of our Elohim. Now instead of being discouraged because of my failure to teach my children the Words of the Torah of my Elohim, Elohim Himself, has encouraged me, through His Word, to live the life that He intended me to live from the very beginning. That is a life that is without compromise, a life totally dedicated to His **TRUTH**, His Torah, and speaking out against any and all injustices, wherever they are found, it is a life that is based on His foundational principal, a life of loving His creation, and His created beings, regardless of what they are doing or what they have done, and learn to live my life as Messiah lived His life, in total loving surrendered obedience to all the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life.

I am now, and will always be, ever so grateful that Yahweh has finally, after all these years, got it through my thick skull, that apart from Him **I CAN DO NOTHING**. Now, knowing that very fundamental **TRUTH**, I can begin to undo the wrong that I have done to my children, by first, willingly choosing to believe, follow and obey ALL the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life, as Messiah, the actual Words of the Living Torah made flesh, did, and taught all of us to do, and thereby becoming an example to my children and all other people that I come in contact with, of what living by Elohim's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah, can do. By me, willingly and lovingly choosing to walk in total loving surrendered obedience to all the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life, as best as I can, I believe that my life will teach them how incredibly liberating, obeying the Word of Yahweh can be. How His Word brings joy, peace, understanding and wisdom.

I am extremely pleased and overjoyed that Elohim has seen fit to bring me to the point where I can at least see my mistakes, and start to live my life according to His Word, and thereby benefit my children, my family and those around me. When they see how their stubborn father's whole life, can be turned around, it will indeed affect them, and I believe that they will at least, begin to question what it is that they

themselves believe, and hopefully, over a period of time, they will come to see the vast wisdom that can only be found in Yahweh's Words.

Can you see how important **IT IS** that we, as fathers, as parents, **BECOME** like Mattathias and lead exemplary lives, lives without compromise or without folding under the pressure of political correctness, lives that scream out against all injustices mentioned in the Word of Elohim?

Make no mistake, you will be branded a rebel, a nonconformist, a social outcast, **BUT** you will be **RIGHT WITH ELOHIM** and His promises **WILL** come **TRUE** in your life.

I am absolutely convinced that **IF** we are willing to act as Bondservants of the Most High Elohim and willingly choose to live our lives in total loving surrendered obedience to **ALL** the Words of our heavenly Father's Torah of Life, as Messiah did, and taught us to do, **IF** we can be zealous for the Words of His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, **THEN**, I can guarantee you, that Yahweh **will be Zealous for us**, and strengthen our resolve to serve Him and obey Him. I believe that it is one of Yahweh's greatest miracles, that whatever you choose to put in your heart, our heavenly Father **WILL strengthen and magnify it**. Therefore, the more of **HIS WORD and HIS TRUTHS** we put in our hearts, the more that Elohim will **strengthen and build those qualities within us**. I believe that that is called building your faith, building your belief system.

So on this, the first night of Hanukkah this year, will you join me in a prayer of commitment to our heavenly Father's **TRUTH**, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life, a commitment to obeying all of His Word, a commitment to truly dedicate our temples to the service of His Kingdom and His glory.

Heavenly Father we come before you having been told about the **Zeal** with which Mattathias and his sons obeyed the Words of Your Torah, under incredible odds and hardships, and at the risk of their own lives. And therefore, we ask, that in Your infinite Grace and Mercy, You strengthen our resolve to be more like Mattathias and his sons. Help us to be zealous for Your Torah. In *Psalm 119:17-18 Deal bountifully with Your bondservants that we may live, and Keep Your Word. 18 Open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of Your Torah (Law)*.

Now that You have dealt bountifully with us Heavenly Father, please, continue to open our eyes that we may indeed behold the wonders that are hidden in Your Torah of Life, and teach us how to apply Your eternal Truths in our daily lives, so that like Mattathias and his sons, we too can be a Light in the darkness, and when the time comes that we are called upon, to do what you ask of us, that we too, would automatically obey You, as Mattathias and his sons did, because Your Word **IS** hidden in our hearts.

We want to serve You heavenly Father, and we want Your will to be done in our lives, and together, we ask that you bless us, by filling us to overflowing with a **ZEAL** to abide in the Vine and walk out Your Torah, Your Living Word, each and everyday of our lives. We ask this in the name of our Messiah, the one and only Yahweh. Amen.

Happy Chanukah

Studying and keeping Torah together as a community.

Have a great Elohim blessed week and may Yahweh bless your every thought, and your every deed. Until we meet again, Shalom Alechem. Amein