

## 1. Meet Yeshua (Jesus)

I have been teaching on the Feasts of the Lord for many years on Victory for one main reason – **they are the most beautiful pictures and revelations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ** (in Biblical Hebrew His name is Yehoshua or Yeshua). **The Feasts of Yehovah (or the Lord) and the other shadows and types of Christ** that are in the Old Testament (the Tanakh) **are the original parables which God used to reveal Himself to man** and prepare us for the coming of the Messiah.

Revelation calls Yeshua Jesus, “The Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.” Meaning, this same Savior began something at the very beginning of the creation of the world that would lead to our salvation. It was veiled like a mystery, so it wasn’t obvious, but as we examine God’s feasts, shadows, and types, we can get a much clearer of who He is.

**We meet Jesus back in Egypt at The First Passover.** He changed the calendar, how we saw time, and revealed Himself as a sacrificial lamb that must be eaten for it to bring life. Passover showed us that the Son of God would come to be a sacrifice for our sins.

**We meet Jesus at The Feast of Firstfruits** as the priest would collect part of the first harvest and wave it in the air as a thanks offering up to Yehovah. Firstfruits revealed Jesus as a seed that needed to die for sin, and when planted would produce a great harvest. Firstfruits showed us that He would not remain in the grave but rise again, and so we could be buried with Him confident of rising again. The Feast of Unleavened Bread showed us that He would be with us in our day to day lives to help us walk free from sin.

**We meet Jesus at Pentecost.** He is the Living Word, The Law, and an unquenchable Fire. His Spirit will dwell in us in power as a deposit and promise of greater things still to come. And for the first time since the tower of Babel, unity.

**We meet Jesus at The Feast of Trumpets** which lets us look back at creation when life began and reminds us that an end to life on earth is also awaiting us. This feast date would become the date Yeshua Jesus would come as a baby to earth as the second Adam to face every temptation for us and bring us total victory. Interestingly, He was greeted at birth by a sky full of angels declaring His praises – and we finally realized what the Feast of Trumpets was all about.

Luke 2:8-13 “**And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified...**Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.**”

**We meet Jesus at The Day of Atonement.** This day reminds us that judgment awaits every man – and there is one judge and only One righteous who will judge the living and the dead.

**And lastly, we meet Jesus at Sukkot – the Feast of Tabernacles** which reminds us that after the judgment there will be a new heaven and a new earth where we will dwell and reign with Jesus forever. Death will be swallowed up in victory and the devil and his angels will be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

## 2. Little Shadows and Types

The specific detail of each Feast is spelled out in the Torah, but the shadows and types are veiled and revealed to us slowly over time. We learn some things from history, some from research, celebrate some things according to traditions, and some things are simply unknowable and so we can choose to just believe according to reasonable doubt.

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There are **two additional festivals called Yom Simchah, “Days of Joy,”** that occurred long after the days of Moses, so they are not listed in the Torah, but they are parables that point to and reveal the Messiah.

**These are Hanukkah (in December) and Purim (in February).**

Hanukkah is not a Biblical feast, but it is an important one for Jews and Christians alike.

If you ever try to google how to spell Hanukkah, you’ll discover that the great news is – **you really can’t misspell this holiday.**

**You can only spell it one way in Hebrew, but there are over twenty different ways to spell it in English** because you transliterate words based on their sounds, and we don’t have all the correct sounds in our English language. That said, Hanukkah and Chanukah are the most common.

**Hanukkah is all about light.** And there’s a good reason for that: **“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; of those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”** (Isaiah 9:1-2).

The month of **Kislev is the darkest of the Jewish year** as the days progressively getting shorter and the nights getting longer. The Winter Solstice (the longest night of the year) usually occurs during Hanukkah, and there is always a new moon (the absence of moonlight) during Hanukkah.

Thankfully, it’s not just any old light, but a light that is triumphant. **“And the Light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.”** John 1:5

But the best news of all is this light is not just coming to shine, but to come and dwell in us.

**“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”** (Isa. 60:1)

### 3. Antiochus and the Hammers

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**These are Hanukkah (in December) and Purim (in February).**

**Hanukkah was the celebration of two different events:** First, it was **when Israel won a great victory against the mighty Greek Empire.** Then, 165 years later it was when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and Yeshua Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit (when He first came to earth in the womb).

**Purim is the story of Esther and the salvation of the Jewish race in Persia and is a picture of our marriage to Jesus and our eternal reign.**

Let’s journey back to when Hanukkah came about. **Hanukkah is the story of the Maccabees.** It’s not a family name, but the Hebrew word for hammer – because a small courageous band of Jewish fighters hammered the mighty Greek army into submission, and liberated Israel from the one of the world’s greatest empires. But that’s not really the beginning.

The Hanukkah story actually begins over three hundred years before Jesus came to earth. In 333 BC, Alexander the Great conquered the known world. He enforced a lenient form of Hellenistic culture, encouraging conquered nations to study the language, customs and dress of the Greeks. One legend tells that when he marched through Jerusalem, he asked the High Priest to erect a statue to his honor within the Temple. The High Priest told Alexander that such was forbidden, though the Jewish people would construct a "living memorial" by naming all their firstborn sons after the great king. Alexander agreed to this, and things went fairly well for the Jews.

When Alexander died suddenly, His kingdom was divided up amongst his generals. Seleucus [suh-loo-kes], founded the Seleucid [suh-loo-suhd] Empire which controlled much of the Middle East, including the territory of Israel. And life continued well until a century later, in 167 BC king Antiochus IV ("Epiphanes") rose to power and sought to eradicate the Jewish faith so that all men would worship as the Greeks.

The books of Maccabees tell us Antiochus installed Hellenistic Jews to the priesthood and demanded all adhere to Hellenistic ideals. He established edicts that prohibited observing the Sabbath and biblical festivals, forbid the speaking of the name of Yehovah, outlawed the reading of the Torah and ordered all copies of it to be burned. Temple sacrifices were forbidden; circumcision was outlawed and the penalty for disobedience was death. The Jews were not fans. Epiphanes means, "God, made manifest," but the Jews referred to him as Epimanes - "the madman."

Eventually, Antiochus set up an altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering in the Temple and sacrificed pigs on the altar in the sanctuary of the Temple itself. This led to an uprising led by five sons of Mattathias, all descendants of the true priestly line. And after three years of fighting, they miraculously defeated a significant world power. The Maccabees liberated the Temple, tore down the defiled altar, and on the third anniversary of its defilement dedicated a new one, and made it a law that their descendants would celebrate this victory and freedom. Hanukkah means dedication, and points to the restoration of the altar. It was a time of great joy.

#### 4. Alex The Goat

Bible scholars believe the prophet **Daniel foresaw the rise of Alexander the Great** in the vision of a "male goat running from the west" (Chapters 8 and 9) that had a conspicuous horn between its eyes. This goat destroyed the power of the kings of Media and Persia (symbolized by two horns on a ram).

Though the goat (Alexander) became exceedingly great, eventually its horn was "broken into four [kingdoms]", and out of these four horns arose a "little horn" (Antiochus Epiphanes) who had authority over "the glorious land" (Israel). This "little horn" greatly magnified itself, cast down some of the stars (righteous), took away the sacrifices, and defiled the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

Daniel's prophecy has a "dual aspect", and this "horn" refers to a future world leader (the Antichrist) who would attempt to "assimilate" all of humanity into a "New World Order". It is the "abomination that makes desolation" referred to by Jesus, and it is the "abomination that makes desolation" that will be overthrown by Yeshua at the end of the Great Tribulation.

As for the Maccabees, sadly within a few decades, the Jews lost their independence and became subjects of Syria and Greece, and finally to Rome. By 70 A.D., not only was their independence gone, but the Romans also utterly destroyed the Temple, their oil, and their lamps. As a "forever" celebration, Hanukkah was a bust. Yet, the rabbis of the Talmud identified only two holidays on which a Jew is required, if necessary, to sell his own clothing to observe them properly - Passover and Hanukkah.

Numbers 10:10 talks about blowing the silver trumpets "on your days of joy, on your appointed times, and on your new moons". The Jewish People observed dozens of days of joy in honor of great events that took place in that period. These days of joy are listed in the Scroll of Fasting, so that people didn't dishonor them by fasting during them. The most important "day of joy" listed was Nicanor Day, which remembered the decisive battle between Judah the Maccabee and the Seleucid general Nicanor in 161 BC.

With the final victory, the Maccabees had every reason to declare a Days of Joy Festival. And they had a significant reason to set apart 8 days of Joy. The Maccabees had failed to observe Sukkot while they were fighting the Greeks, so as soon as they liberated the Temple, they referred back to the rule in Numbers 9 which says if someone fails to take part of the Passover sacrifice in the First Month they can observe a Second Passover in the Second Month. So, they declared a Second Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) as they literally cleansed the Tabernacle.

## 5. Temple Temple

Just knowing that detail helps us get a better handle on why and how we should celebrate Hanukkah. During Sukkot gigantic candelabras stood within the court of the women in the Temple. Four young men bearing 10-gallon pitchers of oil would climb ladders to fill the four golden bowls on each candelabra. And then the oil in those bowls was ignited. The Temple was on a hill above the rest of the city, so the glow was a sight for the entire city to see. The light was to remind the people of how God's Shekinah glory had once filled His Temple.

That glory had descended upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law. It had filled the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and filled Solomon's Temple at its dedication, but the glory left Solomon's Temple as Ezekiel watched, due to Israel's relentless sin. The eventual result was the destruction of the glory-less Temple by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Even when Herod constructed the Second Temple, the glory would never return and rest on the temple again. Jesus would call it "My Father's House," but the Shekinah would only return when He was resting on Jesus as He came and went.

As Jesus left the Temple for the Mount of Olives, retracing the steps of the departure of the glory in Ezekiel's day, it was no longer His Father's house. His words were telling, "Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yehovah.'"

At His crucifixion, the temple was left desolate and unprotected once again. The glory would fall on the disciples and others at that same Pentecost, but the glory did not return to the temple. The eventual result was the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

2,000 years ago, when Jesus arrived at Sukkot, it wasn't about the candelabras, or oil, or light. In the person of Jesus, God's glory was once again present in that Temple. And on the 8th day of the Feast, He was teaching in the court of women, perhaps standing near those magnificent candelabras when He declared to all there, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

Later in John 10:10 we see Jesus attending Hanukkah, "It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication."

As it happened, Hanukkah must have held a special place in His heart and on Heaven's calendar. About 160 years after the Maccabees 8-day victory celebration, the Hanukkah Feast in Bethlehem had an angelic visitor as Gabriel visited Mary. Luke doesn't tell us anything outright about what time of year that visit took place, so how do we know it was Hanukkah? There are a bunch of clues there. It requires a bit of investigative work. Let's lay out the calendar alongside our Bibles:

## 6. I Am The Light Of The World

Luke 1 says, "In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah...Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense."

There were twenty-four priestly divisions as listed in the Book of Chronicles. Each order was responsible for ministering during a specific week and Shabbat. The division of Abijah was the 8<sup>th</sup> order which would have placed him in the temple through the tenth week due to the Feast of Weeks (Sivan 12-18) when he would have spoken with the angel.

He would have remained away from his wife for an additional two weeks due to the laws of separation. Luke 1 continues, "When his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people." This places John's birth near Passover in the Spring.

Luke 1 again: "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David...the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus [Yeshua]. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end."

So, we know Elizabeth was in her sixth month when Gabriel visited Mary, meaning John the Baptist would be born six months before Jesus' birth. John was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth during Passover in the Spring (near March 10, 3 BC). Which means Jesus was born 6 months later during the Fall Feasts.

We can narrow down the day by following some prophecy and the magi. What star did the Magi likely see to recognize Jesus was to be born and when? Let's look at When? There was an interesting conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BC, and another one with Mars as a third planet in early 6 BC, but the planets were too far away from one another in both conjunctions to be considered a single 'star.' As for 5 BC and 4 BC, there was nothing of astronomical importance that would have caused anyone to journey to Jerusalem.

## 7. A Great and Wondrous Sign

But in 3 BC and 2 BC, the whole heavens burst forth with signs and wonders. The King planet and the King star Regulus had three conjunctions. In August of 3 BC, when Gad the King planet (also called Jupiter by that time) became visible above the eastern horizon as a morning star, it was seen by the Magi 'in the rising.' The bright new star appeared in the head of Comah (The baby in the Virgin's lap).

On August 12 of 3 BC, Gad came into conjunction with Meni (also called Venus by that time), as the morning star in the constellation of Ariel The Lion (the sign of Judah). The Virgin and Lion constellations are next to each other. We are given a bonus confirmation in Revelation 12 – A SIGN in Heaven. **"A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.**

**She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth...She gave birth to a Son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to His throne."**

Since we know that verse is speaking of the birth of Jesus – If we can find a time when the sun, moon, planets, and key stars are in the positions mentioned in that verse, then it should tell up when He was born.

There are twelve signs of the Zodiac, so as the earth revolves about the sun, each sign is "clothed with the sun" for one twelfth of the year, or one month.

The Virgin constellation is the only "sign of a woman" that is located within the normal paths of the Sun and Moon along the ecliptic as they cross the heavens.

We know the great sign in heaven was speaking about Jesus being born to Mary. To determine when, He would have to be born when Bethulah the Vigin was clothed with the sun, and that happens every year around September.

Specifically, in the year 3 BC, the position of the Sun, as described in Revelation 12 could only have occurred August 27 through September 15.

Meanwhile the Moon crosses the Virgin constellation every day, and is under her feet each evening.

In the year 3 B.C., the Sun and Moon were in the proper positions only one time, September 11th, beginning at 6:15pm and lasted until 7:45pm. As the New Moon appeared it signaled the beginning of a new lunar month on Tishri 1.

So, according to the Revelation 12 signs, Jesus was born between sunset and moonset on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 3 B.C. On Rosh Hashanah (the Feast of Trumpets).

But the birth isn't the beginning of the story; the beginning happened nine months earlier. To date the encounter between Gabriel, Mary, and the Holy Spirit (the conception of Jesus) we need to count back nine months from The Feast of Trumpets in 3 B.C. The calendar takes us to December of 4 B.C., during the eight-day period of the Festival of Lights - Hanukkah.

## 8. A Tent Called Mary

Ironically, Hanukkah actually helps us better understand the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) because the Maccabees created it to observe the Sukkot they had missed by fighting the Greeks.

Let's read Leviticus 23 to see what God told the Israelites to do at the Feast of Tabernacles and why He may have done this:

Yehovah told Moses...for seven days,

Everyone must celebrate the Festival of Shelters in honor of me.

No one is to do any work on the first day of the festival –

It is a time when everyone must come together for worship.

For seven days, sacrifices must be offered on the altar.

The eighth day is also to be a day of complete rest,

You begin the Festival of Shelters...after you have harvested your crops.

You pick the best fruit from your trees and cut leafy branches to use during the joyous celebration in my honor.

For seven days every Israelite must live in a shelter, so future generations will know that I made their ancestors live in shelters when I brought them out of Egypt..."

Building the flimsy sukkahs caused them to remember the Exodus and the Tabernacle where God would meet Moses.

So, why were these rules set apart by God for Sukkot? How does that relate to Hanukkah or Second Sukkot?

Until that unfathomable moment between God and Mary, it was all shadows and types and pictures. Until Hanukkah – Hanukkah is the beginning.

Jesus left heaven and His glory to come to earth to tabernacle with us – He did that at Hanukah when He entered Mary's womb –

We must celebrate all the festivals, but when you get to Hanukkah, **the focus is entirely on Jesus tabernacling inside Mary so He could come to die.** It's the most Christian of the Festivals.

There's No work - because He did all the work on the cross

We Worship together because Emmanuel has come

The Sacrifices prefigure the cross

It's the End of the harvest – He is the harvester

It's a Joyous celebration – because He is good news of great joy to all the people

We live in shelters at Sukkot because he entered humanity at Hanukah



## 9. Tradition

Hanukkah has many traditions, some of them may not have their roots in truth, but for followers of Jesus, it is most appropriate to light a candle each night of Hanukkah and give thanks that Emmanuel has come and is with us even now. It's the week we remember that He chose to lay down His glory in heaven and become a baby for the sole purpose of dying for our sins.

It's also worth remembering that three hundred years after that first Hanukkah, the Roman emperor Hadrian re-instituted the same anti-Jewish decrees. But sadly, these decrees followed the defeat of the Jews during the Bar Kokhba revolt in 138 A.D. It's why the Jews to this day don't speak the name of Yehovah. Likewise, when the Temple was destroyed in the year 70 CE, all of the days of joy were abolished with the sole exception of the 8 days of Hanukkah.

### The "Maybe" Miracle

Today, Hanukkah is associated with a miracle that supposedly happened in 165 BC, when the Maccabees liberated the Temple. According to the story, the Maccabees searched the Temple looking for olive oil to use in the temple Menorah that was supposed to be lit every day. But since people had been killed in the liberation of the Temple, everything in the temple was deemed ritually impure. They desperately searched for a vial of oil with its seal intact (because the seal would shield it from ritual impurity of the dead.)

The story says Maccabees only found a single vial of oil with the seal intact and immediately lit the Menorah with this oil. But purification from the dead is a seven-day process according to the law so they couldn't do the necessary to produce pure oil until the eighth day. And this is when the miracle supposedly happens: the single vial of oil didn't burn out after one day, or two days, but burned for eight days, providing them time to prepare a new batch of ritually pure oil.

That's the story. It might be true. But it seems rather unlikely since it's not mentioned by any writers until hundreds of years later following the Roman's destruction of the Temple. The events surrounding Hanukkah are described in two historical works called 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees, written shortly after the events took place. Both books describe the events in detail but neither says a word about the miracle of the oil. After the Romans destroyed the temple and the altar in 70 AD, it appears that the rabbis invented the miracle of the oil to give new significance to this festival that was all about the victory over the Greeks and dedication of the altar back in 165 BC.

### Why Eight Days of Hanukkah?

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees give several significant reasons for celebrating Hanukkah for eight days.

1) In Leviticus 9, when Moses dedicated Aaron and his sons as priests in the desert, the ceremony lasted eight days. On the eighth and final day of the dedication, a fire came out of heaven and consumed the sacrifices that Aaron and his sons offered on the altar. (This miracle happened again in 2Chronicles 7 when Solomon dedicated his altar for eight days.

2) The second reason comes from Numbers 9, which says if someone fails to partake of the Passover sacrifice in the first month, they can observe a Second Passover in the second month. Since the Maccabees had failed to observe Sukkot while they were fighting the Greeks, they could make up for it, by declaring a Second Sukkot. Their logic is in 2 Maccabees 10: "And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of booths, remembering how not long before, during the feast of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. "

Josephus also talks about Hanukkah and refers to it as the "Festival of Lights" but says nothing about the miracle of the oil burning for eight days. The first time this miracle is ever mentioned is in the Babylonian Talmud (Sabbath 21b) over three hundred years after the events.