



Week #3

5-10

FOUR JEWISH FEASTS

continued

PESACH OR PASSOVER (First Day of Feast of Unleavened Bread)

Date: The 15th day of the Jewish month Nisan (or Abib), which falls in March or April.

Name: Refers to the Angel of Death “passing over” the homes which the Israelite slaves in Egypt had marked with blood from a sacrificed lamb. This was the last of 10 plagues and moved Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go. Also called Pesach. (PEA sah)

Purpose: Remembers Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

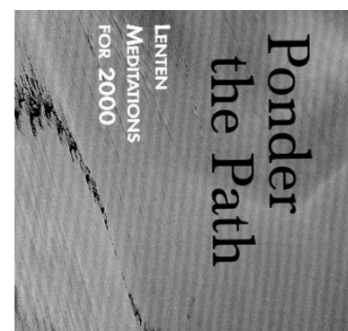
Old Testament: *“Take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs . . . The blood must be a sign . . . I will pass over you . . . the generations to come will celebrate it as a festival to the Lord”* (Exodus 12:7-20). Also Exodus 13:3-10, Leviticus 23:6-8, Numbers 9:1-14, 28:16-25, Deuteronomy 16:1-7.

New Testament: *“When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem”* (John 2:13). Also John 11:55 and Luke 22:8.

Observance: Originally involved sacrificing a lamb on the 11th of Nisan and eating it with the family, together with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The Passover was considered the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted eight days and ended with another celebration. Today the Passover Seder (SAY dur), or Order of Service, is read from the *Haggadah* (the book with the Order of Service) which lists four questions to be asked by a child and in response the story of the Exodus is told.

Tradition: Required food includes: flat, crisp unleavened bread, called *matzoh*, since the Jews left Egypt in such haste their bread did not have time to rise; bitter herbs and salt water, called *maror*, to symbolize the suffering of slavery; four cups of wine. Other traditional foods include *charoseth*, a mixture of chopped apples, nuts and wine, recalling the mortar Jewish slaves mixed for Pharaoh’s monuments, and *karpas*, greens, standing for new spring. One place setting is left empty for the long-awaited guest, the prophet Elijah, who is to announce the coming of the Messiah.

Fulfillment: *“Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Let us keep the Festival . . . with the bread of sincerity and truth”* (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper at that Passover meal using the *matzoh* as His body and the wine as His blood. Christians celebrate the Lord’s Supper in order to receive the forgiveness He obtained by the sacrifice of His body and blood and in order to remember their release from the slavery of sin to the freedom of His kingdom.



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Chapter 6: Passover

- A. How does Jesus show Himself to be the source for the Paschal meal?
- B. What demonstrates that Jesus will be the restorer of the nation?
- C. The Hebrews at the first Passover had to believe in God's Word and protection and abide (remain) in their homes as the Angel of Death *passed over* them.
How does Jesus point to the necessity of entering into believing and abiding in Him for participation in the restored community?
- D. For you...and for people you know...what seems to be the most difficult for people to keep as part of their faith in God?
 - Jesus as source for protection, salvation, redemption
 - Jesus as restorer of the Kingdom of God
 - The necessity of remaining in Jesus for participation in His Kingdom

HANUKKAH

Navarre Commentary states:

This feast commemorates an episode in Jewish history (cf. 1 Maccabees 4:36–59; 2 Mac 1–2:19; 10:1–8) when Judas Maccabeus, in the year 165 B.C., after liberating Jerusalem from the control of the Seleucid kings of Syria, cleansed the temple of the profanations of

Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Mac 1:54). From then onwards, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev (November–December) and throughout the following week, all Judea celebrated the anniversary of the dedication of the new altar. It was also known as the “festival of lights” because it was customary to light lamps, a symbol of the Law, and put them in the windows of the houses (cf. 2 Mac 1:18).



Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture (1953, edited by Bernard Orchard) adds:

As commemorating the renewal of worship in the temple in 165 B.C., after the profanations of Antiochus Ephiphanes, it held an important place in the festal calendar.

John Calvin, in his *Commentaries*, also acknowledges this:

The Greek word (ἐγκαίνια) which we have translated dedication, properly signifies renovations; because the temple, which had been polluted, was again consecrated by the command of Judas Maccabaeus; and at that time it was enacted that the day of the new dedication or consecration should be celebrated every year as a festival, that the people might recall to remembrance the grace of God, which had put an end to the tyranny of Antiochus.

CHANUKKAH (Festival of Dedication)

Date: Eight days beginning with the 25th day of the Jewish month Kislev (November/December).

Name: Chanukkah (HA noo kah) means Dedication. It commemorates the rededication of the temple after it was defiled by Syrians and made into a pagan shrine. It is also called the “Festival of Lights” because the sacred temple lamp is said to have burned eight days on one day’s supply of sacred oil, all that was left.

Purpose: To celebrate the Jewish victory over the Syrians by Judah the Maccabee in 165 B.C. and to celebrate regaining political and religious freedom.

Old Testament: None. (The Jewish victory over the Syrians occurred after Old Testament history.) The story is recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees, two historical books of the Apocrypha.

New Testament: *“Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade”* (John 10:22-23).

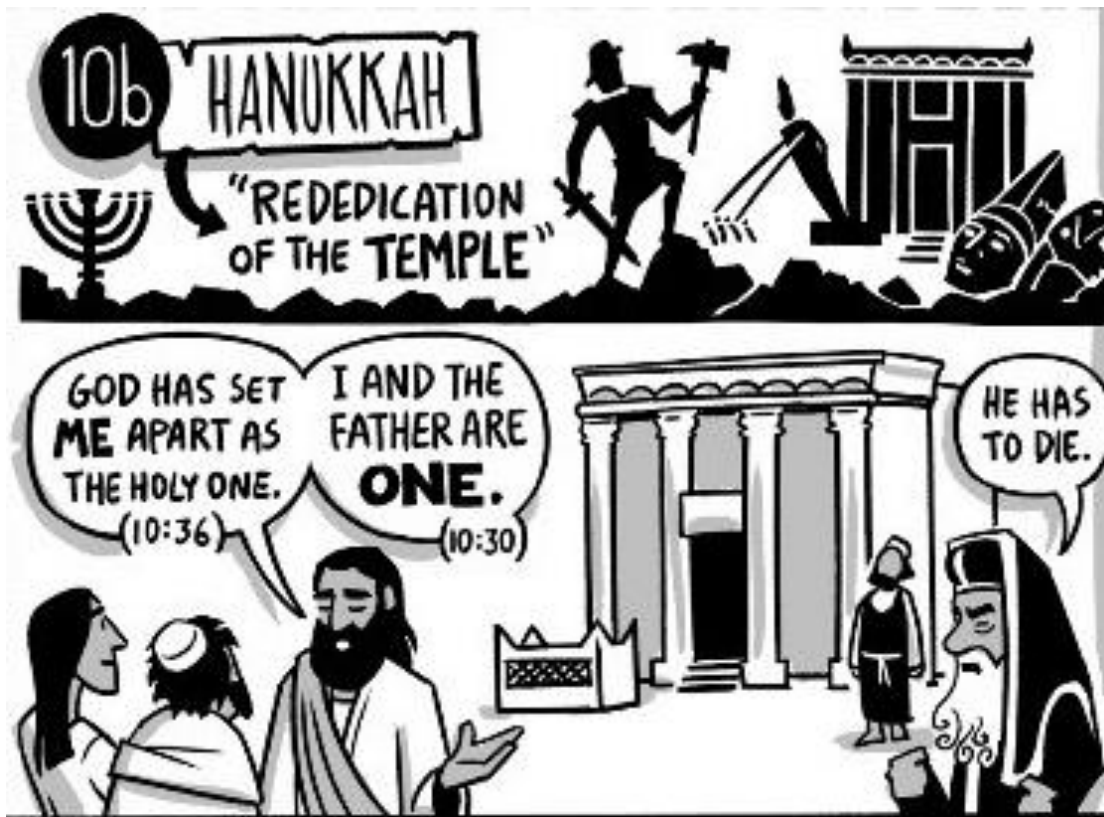
Observance: A special nine-branch candleholder, called *Hannukkiyyuh*, is used so that a candle can be lit on each of the eight days of Celebration. The *shammes*, the helper or servant candle, is lit first and it is used to light the other candles, one on the first day, two on the second, and so on through the eight days of Chanukkah. This recalls the miraculous burning of the temple light for eight days on one day’s supply of oil.

Tradition: Pancakes made with potatoes and oil, called *latkes*, are a traditional treat, the oil in the *latkes* recalling the oil in the sacred temple lamp. Other popular foods are doughnuts and cheese dishes.

Children play with *dreidles* (DRAY dulls), square tops inscribed with the Hebrew letters N, G, H and S for the Hebrew phrase, *“Nes Gadol Haya Sham,”* (ness gah-DOLE hah-YAH shahm) meaning “A great miracle happened there.”

Gifts are exchanged, especially between members of the family.

Fulfillment: Just as the lights of Chanukkah overcome darkness, so the darkness of this world is overcome by Jesus who said, *“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).



Chapter 10b: Hanukkah

Read John 10:22-42.

- What is significant about Jesus walking in the “Colonnade of Solomon”?
- The Jews ask Jesus if He is the Christ. How is that question, perhaps, especially on their minds as they recall Judas Maccabeus?
What kind of Messiah would that have been led them to seek?
- Why does Jesus specifically quote Psalm 82 and what does He mean?



<http://kabane52.tumblr.com>

The debate with the Jews that follows is intended to link with the division that has just occurred. Some think Jesus has a demon, others point out that He cannot liberate the oppressed if He has a demon. By implication, the dichotomy is between being part of demonic oppression or fighting against demonic oppression. The dialogue that follows is then set in the light of the Feast of Dedication, or Hannukah. The Jews accuse Jesus of making Himself out to be God. In other words, He is a New Antiochus, who named himself Epiphanes, or “God manifest.” Jesus responds by quoting Psalm 82, which is an address by God to the wicked members of the divine council, promising that they will one day be cast from the council so that God might inherit all the nations.

Jesus’ use of this passage is important. The true defilement in Israel is demonic. Jesus is not the New Antiochus, instead, He is the one whom the Father “consecrated and sent into the world.” He is the true high priest who cleanses the world from its demonic impurity, and He fulfills the words of Psalm 82 because the Father is active in His deeds. This then answers the division which immediately preceded this passage. Jesus is not possessed by a demon. He fulfills the prophecy (the phrase “Scripture cannot be broken” indicates that Jesus understood that Psalm 82 was prophetic and was not a back-reference to Israel at Sinai, but a reference to the divine council) of Psalm 82 where the demonic members of the council are destroyed. He is not Antiochus Epiphanes, He is the one who cleanses the Temple.

The Hanukkah Shepherd

debradeanmurphy.wordpress.com/2010/04/21/the-hanukkah-shepherd/

4/21/2010

John 10:22-30

It's a minor point in the passage, perhaps—that Jesus is in Jerusalem for this winter festival (10:22)—but it's also a reminder that the fourth evangelist frames Jesus' public ministry liturgically: around Israel's many feasts, fasts, and holy days. (This also reminds us that John's much commented-on problem with "the Jews" is one internal to the community: a family squabble, not an outsider's assault on the faith).

But maybe the reference to the festival of the Dedication is not incidental after all. [Tom Wright](#) notes that when Jesus' contemporaries celebrated Hanukkah, they would have been mindful not only of liberation and the restoration of the Temple, but of kings and kingship—the tyrant Antiochus whom the Maccabees resisted; Herod the Great—the villainous, dynastic puppet-king appointed by Rome to rule over the Judeans.

But Jesus doesn't talk about a king; he talks about a shepherd. (This tenth chapter of John's Gospel, in fact, serves as the appointed text for Good Shepherd Sunday—the fourth Sunday of Easter—all three years of the lectionary cycle: vv. 1-10 for Year A; 11-18 for Year B; and 22-30 for Year C).

For the rabbi Jesus to call himself the "good shepherd" would have been offensive to the religious elite; it was a claim with a socio-economic edge to it. A modern-day equivalent might be for Jesus to say, as [Nancy Blakely](#) has noted, "I am the good migrant worker."

So John is doing in his gospel something that Luke does in his. In the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus similarly scandalizes his hearers. The kingdom comes, he says, in surprising, unpredictable ways, through unheralded people and events, through a God who turns our expectations and our prejudices upside down.

The Good Samaritan. The Good Shepherd. Those who are lowly, contemptible; those who are discounted in a world of power and prestige: pay attention to these, the Gospel writers seem to say—God is probably at work in their midst. The Good Samaritan gives fully of himself to save a stranger. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

