

December 6, 2020

## Family Christmas: Hanukkah and the Lampstand

At what time of year was Jesus born? No one knows for sure, but I believe in December. This year, December 10th, 2020 is **Hanukkah** which is known as the Jewish "**Festival of Lights**" and as the "**Feast of Dedication**." The Hebrew word for dedication is Chanukah (Hanukkah).

"In 175 BC, Antiochus IV came to power. He chose for himself the name Antiochus Epiphanes, which means "god manifest." He began to persecute the Jews in earnest. He outlawed Jewish religious practices (including the observance of kosher food laws) and ordered the worship of the Greek god Zeus.

His ultimate act of desecration, precipitating the Maccabean Revolt, was to sacrifice a pig to Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem in 167 BC. Faithful Jewish opposition had been an undercurrent all along, but Antiochus' overt act of desecration brought it to the surface, and the result was the Maccabean Revolt. Mattathias, a **Jewish priest**, led the organized resistance along with his five sons: John Gaddi, Simon Thassi, Eleazar Avaran, Jonathan Apphus, and Judas Maccabeus (*Maccabeus* comes from the Hebrew word for "**hammer**") (Rods of Iron, Swords and Hammers; symbolic of judgment and justice; mine)

Mattathias started the rebellion by preventing a Jew from sacrificing to a pagan god and then killing an officer of the king. Mattathias escaped with his family to the hills where he was joined by many other faithful Jews. From there, they conducted guerilla warfare against the Seleucids, but much of their wrath was also directed against fellow Jews who had embraced Greek culture (Hellenized Jews). The rebels tore down pagan altars, circumcised boys, and forced Hellenized Jews to become "outlaws" with no rights or legal protection. Upon Mattathias' death in 166 BC, his son Judas Maccabeus took command of the rebellion. Judas saw himself as a leader like **Moses, Joshua, and Gideon**." <https://www.gotquestions.org/Maccabean-Revolt.html>

The Temple was cleansed from the pagan defilement and in 164 BC the decision was made to **rededicate** the Temple. Unfortunately, there was only enough **holy olive oil** to light the golden lampstand (the menorah) for one day, but the dedication was to last 8 days. The decision was made to light the menorah and it miraculously burned for 8 days!

**John 10:22-23** *Now it was the **Feast of Dedication** in Jerusalem, and it was **winter**. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.*

Over 2000 years ago the **Light of the World** stepped into the Temple to celebrate the **Festival of Lights**. Once inside, Jesus said His sheep know His voice, they follow Him, and are protected by His Father God. We the sheep are God's family, and just as Jesus is the Light of the World, we too carry that same light. We are children of light! **Eph 5:8** *For you were once darkness, but now **you are light in the Lord**. Walk as **children of light**.*

**Walking in the light**; being transparent, open and honest. Doing good works causing others to glorify our Father in Heaven. The light of Jesus comes from His glory that is in us. His glory is increasing and so is our brightness. Light is also symbolic of the truth. Walking in the light is **walking in righteousness**.

**Matt 5:14-16** *"**You are the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a **lampstand**, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 **Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your **good works** and **glorify** your Father in heaven."*

**We are that lampstand** filled with anointing oil, shining the glory of Jesus. **Rev 1:20** *The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the **seven** golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the **seven lampstands** which you saw are the **seven churches**.*

This is a "we" thing, not a "me" thing. The original Tabernacle of Moses **lampstand had seven lamps** and is a paradigm of the light that is inside of us, we are the temple or tabernacle for the Spirit of God. Together we bring our light and form the lampstand. We work with the seven stars who are the seven angels. We are a family of light!

**Isa 58:8,9** Then **your light** shall break forth like the **morning**, **Your healing** shall spring forth speedily, And **your righteousness** shall go before you; The **glory of the Lord** shall be **your rear guard**. 9 Then **you** shall call, and the Lord will answer; **You** shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' This is priceless; amidst the trouble hearing God's voice and comfort. Like Jesus said, "My sheep hear My Voice and follow Me...and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

**Isa 58:10-11** ...Then **your light** shall dawn in the darkness, And **your darkness shall be as the noonday**. 11 The Lord will **guide you** continually, And satisfy **your soul in drought**, And **strengthen your bones**;

**Isa 60:1-3** Arise, shine; For **your light** has come! And the **glory** of the Lord is **risen upon you**. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the **brightness of your rising**.

#### **UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS:**

**2 Peter 1:19** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a **light that shines** in a dark place, **until the day dawns** and the **morning star rises** in your hearts;

#### **The Three Wise Men**

What the Magi likely saw were five astronomical conjunctions that took place over a span of time from August of 3 BC to June of 2 BC. When one planet passes another and, as seen from earth, they line up – that would have been of great significance to these astrologer-advisers.

We now know what these conjunctions meant to these Magi as they would have observed from their far-off land. The conjunctions involved the constellation Leo the Lion, the planet Venus, the planet Jupiter and the star Regulus.

To the Babylonians, the lion represented Israel. Venus was motherhood. Jupiter stood for fatherhood or kingship. And Regulus symbolized royalty.

Put these together in the Babylonian mindset and what do you get? A clear and repeated message that a grand king had been born in Israel.

Larson used computerized astronomical tools to track the convergence of these heavenly signs involving Jupiter, Venus, Leo, and Regulus, back to when they would have occurred.

"Nine months after that first conjunction – nine months – the gestation period of a human. We see Jupiter and Venus come together to form the brightest star anyone had ever seen," Larson said. Eventually, Larson traces it all to a conclusion on Dec. 25, in 2 BC. <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2020/december/rare-star-of-bethlehem-to-appear-dec-21-heres-what-astronomy-says-about-the-biblical-star-at-christs-birth>

**This Year:** Dec 21, 2020 is the winter solstice; the shortest daylight in the Northern Hemisphere. Some cultures consider this day as the birth of new life as the sunlight now starts to shine longer. **Jupiter and Saturn** are lining up to create a bright star of wonder, what is known as the "Christmas Star" or "Star of Bethlehem." This has not happened in nearly 800 years (Fox 8 posted 12-2-2020).

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