

Chanukah is considered to be just a Jewish festival because, like the festival of Purim, it isn't among the the Big 10 of God's appointments with His people listed in the Torah: Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, Pesach, Matzah, Bikkurim, Shavuot, Yom Teruah, Yom Kippurim, Sukkot and Shmini Atzeret.

Yet, "the disciple Yeshua loved" recorded that Yeshua celebrated it (John 10:22–42). But the arc of the teaching there starts in chapter 7 with Yeshua at Sukkot, the Festival of Tabernacles.

Layers of teachings in Chanukah

Historical: The Maccabean movement overcame a far larger, better-trained and -equipped army under Greek Seleucid king Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who profaned the Temple. The priests then rededicated the Temple on the 25th day of the ninth month (Kislev) in 165 B.C. They celebrated for eight days to mirror the eight-day festival of Sukkot they weren't able to celebrate two months before.

L ayer: Chanukah seems to commemorate the fulfillment of the 2,300 evening-morning prophecy of the "abomination of desolation" in *Daniel* 8:

(Dan. 8:14) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי עַד עֶרֶב בִּקְרֹא אֶלְפַיִם וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת וְנִצְדָק קִדְשׁ
va-yomer 'eyli 'erev boqer 'alpa'im ushlosh mey'ot v-nitsdda qodesh
"He said to me, 'Until 2,300 evening and morning;
then [the] holy [place] will be made righteous.'" (MT¹)

"And he said to him, 'Two thousand three hundred evening and morning times,
and the sanctuary will be purified.'" (LXX²)

- There has been much debate about the application of this prophecy.
 - William Miller in the early 19th century promoted the interpretation that the *evening-morning* was a euphemism for *day*, based on "evening and morning" in *Genesis* 1. So, that would mean 2,300 days. Using a day-for-a-year metric from certain prophecies (40 years in Num. 14:34, 390 + 40 days in Ezek. 4:4–8, one day = thousand years = one day in 2nd Pet. 3:8 cf. Ps. 90:4), Miller determined that the 2,300 days meant 2,300 years and was related to the 69-plus-one *shavuim* (*sevens*) of years (i.e., 483 + seven years) in *Daniel* 9. Figuring from one of the proclamations from Persia to rebuild the Temple in 600–400 B.C., he eventually figured the 2,300-year prophecy would end on what he figured to be Oct. 22, 1844. Miller figured the "holy [place]" in the prophecy was the Earth and the "cleansing" would be the return of Messiah Yeshua.
 - Since Miller's time, the ancient Jewish understanding that the 2,300-evening-morning prophecy points to the defilement of the Temple and violent suppression of Torah observance by Antiochus IV has re-emerged in Christian circles as an accepted interpretation.
- The "evening morning" in Dan. 8:14 likely are the evening and morning sacrifices in the tabernacle.
 - The images in the vision in *Daniel* 8 of the "flying goat" with a conspicuous horn between its eyes and of the ram with a bigger and a smaller horn are of Greece under its "first" or "leading" king overtaking Medo-Persia, respectively. The great king of Greece would be "broken" and substituted with four kingdoms. In the waning days of the four kingdoms, one of their kings will be a great oppressor of "the holy people," i.e., the people faithful to the Creator. (Dan. 8:18–24)
 - Dan. 8:11–12 says this "little horn" will fight תָּמִיד *ha-tamim* ("the continual," "regular sacrifice," "daily sacrifice" or "regular burnt offering").
 - There were evening and morning presentations of *ha-tamim* (Ex. 29:38-42; Num 28:3, 4; offered "morning and evening" in 1st Chron. 16:40 in 2nd Chron. 2:4).
 - The *Septuagint* translation (Greek, third to first centuries B.C.) of Dan. 8:14 clarifies that the 2,300 refers to "ἑσπέρας καὶ πρωὶ ἡμέραι" (Dan. 8:14), literally "evening and morning times." The *Septuagint* also translates נִצְדָק *nitsdaq* (H6663, *straighten*, i.e., *justify* or *make righteous*) as καθαρισθήσεται *katharisthesetai* (καθαρίζω *katharizō*, G2511, *to cleanse*), meaning *to be cleansed*.
 - What "time" was at issue? What had to be cleansed? Dan. 8:13 says that the *vision* of the 2,300 relates to several elements: *ha-tamim*, abomination that causes horror, (the) holy (place) and trampling of the people:

1 Based on the *New American Standard Bible* rendering, which is based on the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

2 Based on a more literal rendering of *A New English Translation Of The Septuagint* by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, Eds. International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc.: 2007.

- So, 2,300 evening and morning offerings of *ha-tamim* equates to 1,150 days, or roughly three years, two months and 10 days, based on a 360-day lunar year.
- Antiochus IV profaned the Temple on the 15th and 25th days of the ninth month (Kislev) in 167 B.C., first with a statue of Zeus then a sacrifice of a pig on the altar:
“Now on the 15th day of Chislev, in the 145th year [167 B.C.], they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Yehudah,⁵⁵ and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets.⁵⁶ The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire.⁵⁷ Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death.⁵⁸ They kept using violence against Israel, against those found month after month in the cities.⁵⁹ And on the 25th day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar which was upon the altar of burnt offering.⁶⁰ According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised,⁶¹ and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers’ necks.⁶² But many in Yisrael stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food.⁶³ They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die.⁶⁴ And very great wrath came upon Yisrael.” (1st Macc. 1: 54–64)

Layer: Chanukah seems to be the timing given to Khaggi (Haggai), a prophet during the time of the Persian occupation and a member of Israel’s Great Assembly, about some great glory coming to the Temple, which was just then being rebuilt at that time.

- Khaggi had a prophecy on the 21st day of the seventh month, which is the last day of Sukkot (the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths), to tell Zerubbabel that there would be a “greater glory” coming to the Temple (Hag. 2:1–9).
- The Word of the LORD came to Khaggi twice on the 24th day of the ninth month, talking about true holiness of the priesthood and the Temple and again about the greater glory coming to the Temple.
- Zerubbabel’s Temple, usually called the “second temple” after Solomon’s “first,” was dedicated during Sukkot and rededicated on the 25th day of the ninth month hundreds of years later.
- But the “greater glory” Khaggi wrote about didn’t come to the Temple on that day until the Son of God entered it on that day and proclaimed something startling.

Layer: Yeshua observed Chanukah in the Temple (Jn. 10:22–39). During that celebration, Yeshua proclaimed in the Temple, “I and the Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), clarifying shortly thereafter, “the Father is in Me, and I in the Father” (v. 38).

- The leaders of the Temple had planned to stone Yeshua for making a bold statement about Himself on an earlier occasion in the previous two months³ — “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’ ” (Jn. 8:58) — the leaders prepared to stone Yeshua on Chanukah:
“For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself *out to be God.*’ ” (Jn. 10:33)
 - **John 7:** Yeshua goes to the Temple during Sukkot.
 - Yeshua’s *time* in John 7:6, 9 refers to a set time for Him to have gone, translated from *καῖρός kairos* (G2540), the same Greek word used to describe other *appointed times*, such as Yeshua’s death at the time of the Passover sacrifice and his rising on the third day, which was Firstfruits.
 - In John 7:36–37, Yeshua’s talk of coming to Him for *living water*, as in the water-pouring ceremony of the seventh day of Sukkot, draws from *Isaiah 44* and *55*.
 - “Who is like Me?” (Isa. 44:7) should point us back to at least seven times the phrase “Who is like You?” refers to God in Scripture. The first use is in the first Song of Moshe:
 - “Who is like You among the gods, O LORD?” (Ex. 15:11) in Hebrew is:

מִי־כַמֹּכָה בְּאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה
Mi-khamokha ba-elohim, YHWH
 - *Maccabee* מַכַּבֵּי, along with meaning *hammer* in Hebrew, is thought to be a Hebrew initialism for the words of Ex. 15:11. That was the key question that the Maccabee movement answered in fighting back against Antiochus IV and rededicating the Temple.
 - Yeshua was emphasizing that the water pouring symbolized by the ceremony during Sukkot was God’s pouring out His words (Isa. 54:17–55:9). God’s people should be “thirsty” for His words and “listen carefully.” The leaders of Israel in Yeshua’s day were afraid that Yeshua would go off to teach “the Greeks” of the Diaspora, but that was what God foretold through *Isaiah* would happen.
 - **John 8:** Yeshua pardons a woman caught in adultery and teaches about true *light* in the world.
 - Pouring of water was a second-temple ceremony. The timing of chapter 8 seems to be after Sukkot

3 The timeframe of *John 7–10* appears to be Sukkot through Chanukah. See Jeff Quackenbush, “John 7-10: Yeshua answers on Chanukah the question of His being the Messiah,” Audio recording <www.hallel.info/john-7-10-yeshua-answers-on-chanukah-the-question-of-his-being-the-messiah/>, Hallel Fellowship: Dec. 6, 2012.

and the Eighth Day.

- This passage continues the lesson of chapter 7: listen carefully to God's words. In this passage, Yeshua tells the leaders that His Father is the LORD, and Yeshua's words come from the LORD (John 8:12ff).
- Yeshua taught that truly being descendants of Abraham involved having as much trust in God's words as Abraham did, that God would provide a son and vast progeny from a barren woman. Yeshua went further in the cutting lesson from Abraham: the Seed of Khawah/Khavah (Eve) and of Abraham through his miraculously provided son, Yitzkhak, was the Messiah, named Yeshua.
- **John 9:** Yeshua, 'light of the world,' brings 'light' to a man born blind.
- **John 10:1–6** continues the discussion of chapter 9: the blindness of key leaders that Yeshua was the Messiah by way of His teachings and use of God's power.
 - They kept asking Him, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly" (v. 25). Yeshua emphasized that the power of God that Yeshua demonstrated testified to that identity.
- The LORD had come to Israel through Yeshua, and the people should pay attention during the short time of that visit. Yeshua's healing on Shabbat and other verbal and miraculous lessons were teaching the thoughts of God, and the leaders should ponder those lessons, particularly if they aren't immediately obvious.
- Indeed, what Yeshua said in v. 30 did intimate that God was visiting the Temple that Chanukah:
 - εἷς *heis* in Greek for *one* in that verse is the same word used in the *Septuagint* to translate אֶחָד *ekhad* in the Shema (Deut. 6:4; aka "the Greatest Commandment"):

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH Eloheynu; YHWH ekhad

Ἄκουε, Ἰσραὴλ· Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν Κύριος εἷς ἐστίν

Akoue, Israēl, Kyrios ho Theos hēmōn; Kyrios heis estin

Layer: The first and second temples were dedicated on Sukkot. The second temple was rededicated on a "second Sukkot," something like the "second Passover" in the second month of the year.

- Indeed, a reason recorded for why Chanukah is celebrated for eight days is that the defilement of the Temple under Antiochus IV prevented the celebration of Sukkot/Shmeni Atseret:

"Now [Judas] Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city: But the altars that the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down. And having cleansed the temple they made another altar, and striking stones they took fire out of them, and offered a sacrifice after two years, and set forth incense, and lights, and shewbread. When that was done, they fell flat down, and besought the Lord that they might come no more into such troubles; but if they sinned any more against him, that he himself would chasten them with mercy, and that they might not be delivered unto the blasphemous and barbarous nations. Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the 25th of the same month, which is Chislev. And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts. Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto Him that had given them good success in cleansing his place. They ordained also by a common statute and decree, that every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews." (2nd Macc. 10:1-8)

Layer: Miriam, the human mother of Yeshua, prayed at the Enunciation — really, it was the dedication of her body as the vessel for the Messiah — in a manner quite similar to Hannah's prayer at her enunciation.

Layer: Yeshua taught about His death and resurrection in three days in terms of "this temple" being torn down and rebuilt.

Layer: Yeshua linked the "abomination of desolation" foretold by Daniel to a coming "abomination of desolation."

- Titus, the one who destroyed Yerushalayim and the Temple in A.D. 70, was the 10th emperor of Rome (born Dec. 30, 39; reigned as "Titvs Flavivs Caesar Vespasianvs Avgvstvs" from June 24, 79–Sept. 13, 81). Could the destruction of the Temple by the 10th emperor be linked to the destruction of Rome's power at the time of the 10 toes of iron and clay in the prophetic statue of Daniel 2?⁴

Layer: The numbers eight and 25 are connected to Chanukah in key Torah passages:

- **Eight**
 - The common name for the day following seven days of Sukkot (Festival of Tabernacles) is Shmini Atseret in Hebrew, or "Assembly of the Eighth (Day)." The day also is called Simchat Torah, Hebrew for "joy of the Torah," based on the centuries old practice in synagogues of restarting the cycle of Torah readings at that time. God first defines Shmini Atseret in Lev. 23:33–36:

"On the eighth day [יּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי] you shall have a holy convocation [מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ *mikra qodesh*, i.e., a holy calling out] and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly [אֲסֶרֶת *'atseret*, from *to inclose*]. You shall do no laborious work." (Lev 23:36; cf. Num. 29:35–38)

 - The Hebrew word for *eight* is שמנה *shemoneh* (H8083), thought to come from the verb שמן *shaman*

4 Daniel Lancaster. "Prophetic Comparison." *The Light of the World: Hanukkah and the Rise of the Anti-Christ*. Audio recording. First Fruits of Zion: 2013.

(H8080), which means *to shine*, as if to be made waxy or oily. A related word is מִשְׁחָ שֶׁמֶן *shemen* (H8081), or *oil*.

- The Messiah is closely connected with oil, because the Hebrew of the title מָשִׁיחַ *Mashiakh* (H4899) means *anointed one*.
 - *Mashiakh* comes from the verb מָשַׁח *mashakh* (H4886), *to smear or anoint*.
 - Priests, prophets and kings were *mashakh*-ed with consecrated oil.

“And they wandered about from nation to nation, From one kingdom to another people. ¹⁴ He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reproved kings for their sakes: ¹⁵ ‘Do not touch My anointed ones [*mashiakh*], And do My prophets no harm.’” (Psa. 105:13–15)
 - Some people shy away from the Greek word *Christ* because it was used in Greek literature to refer to anointings tied to pagan deities.
 - Yet, the *Septuagint* uses χριστός *christos* to translate *mashiakh*:

“Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed [מָשִׁיחַ/χριστός], saying, ³ ‘Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!’” (Psa. 2:1–3)
 - Because pagan cultures circumcise or anoint with oil, doesn’t mean the words for those actions in those languages are automatically off limits as paeans to paganism.
 - Newborns are to be circumcised on their eighth day outside the womb.
 - Eight women in Scripture had miraculous conceptions:
 - Seven barren women were graced with children: Sarai/Sarah (*Genesis* 21), Rivkah (Rebecca, *Genesis* 25), Rakhel (Rachel, *Genesis* 30), Samson’s mother (*Judges* 13), Khannah (Hannah, *1st Samuel* 1–2), a Shunemite woman (*2nd Kings* 4) and Elisheva (Elizabeth, *Luke* 1–2).
 - God graced the eighth woman with a child without a man involved: Miriam (Mary, *Luke* 1–2).⁵
 - The greatest gift of life of all, the Son of God, came from the greatest gift where no life should have been possible.
- **Twenty-five**
 - Rabbis looking for precedent of Chanukah in the Torah noted that אֵר *’or* (light) is the 25th Hebrew word in the Bible. They long compared the oppression of the Greeks on the Land of Israel to darkness falling on the Earth:

“The Midrash (*Bereishit Rabbah* 2:4) says that the phrase ‘And darkness [on the face of the abyss (Gen. 1:2)]’ symbolizes Greece, which darkened the eyes of the Jewish people with its decrees, ordering Israel ‘write on the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel,’ i.e. Antiochus requested from the Jews a public disclaimer of Hashem and Torah.”⁶
 - Rabbis noted that the 25th encampment of Yisra’el coming out of Mitsraim was at מַחֲנֵיךְ *Khashmonah* (Num. 33:29–30, H2832). The leaders of the Maccabean revolt were called *Khashmonim*.
 - *Khashmonah* is thought to derive from מַחֲמָן *khashman* (H2831), which based on its Ugartic corollary is thought to mean *bronze- or red-colored cloth*. The only use of *khashman* is in Psa. 68:31[32] and is translated as “envoy” or “ambassador” because that could have been what was brought from Mitsraim in the prophecy in the psalm.⁷

5 Daniel Agee. “Chanukah celebrates dedicated women.” Audio recording. <www.hallel.info/chanukah-celebrates-dedicated-women/> Hallel Fellowship: Nov. 27, 2010.

6 Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky. “Hints for Chanukah in the Torah.” *VeDibarta Bam*. <www.sichosinenglish.org/books/vedibarta-bam/145.htm> Sichos In English: 2005.

7 Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT). Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands: 2000.