

חג חנוכה 5786

The Festival of Hanukkah 5786

and

its Connection to the Prophet Haggai

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word חנוכה (Hanukkah) is dedication. After the Temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C., the nation of Israel rededicated the Temple, purifying it from the sacrilege which Antiochus Epiphanes had committed. This event lays the foundation for another Biblical event which will take place in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. This event is known as the Abomination of Desolation. It is mentioned in Daniel chapters 9, 11, and 12. It is also referred to by Yeshua in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. It is the Apostle Paul who brings greater clarity to this event, as he uses most similar language to Daniel 11:36, when he writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:4,

ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει, ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

"The one who is made to oppose and made to exalt himself over all which is named G-d or worshipped, so that he in the sanctuary (Holy of Holies) of G-d sits, and manifests himself that he is god.

The primary question which this article will address is how is the prophecy of Haggai connected to Hanukkah? There is a clear focus by Haggai on the Temple. In fact, the Temple is mentioned ten times in Haggai chapters 1 and 2. The name of Haggai means my festivals. There is a clear mention of the Feast of Tabernacles in Haggai 2:1, as the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned, the 21st day of the seventh month. This day is known as Hoshana Rabbah, which means *"The Great Salvation"*. This provides an important textual clue to the reader as the second chapter of Haggai is about the establishment of a Messianic Kingdom which will rule over the entire earth. In one sense, this prophecy is about the building of the Second Temple, but in Haggai 2:9 there is a very significant change from the Second Temple period to that of the Last Temple,

גָּדוֹל יְהִי כְבוֹד הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן־הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וּבִמְקוֹם הַזֶּה אֶתֵּן שְׁלֹום נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:

"Great will be the Glory of this Temple, the last one, more than the first, said the L-rd of Host and in this place I will give peace, declares the L-rd of Hosts." Haggai 2:9

The reference to the “Last Temple” relates to the Temple that will be present during the Millennial Kingdom. Please note that there will not be any Temple in the New Jerusalem (See Revelation 21:22).

Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον.

“And a Sanctuary, I did not see in it, for the L-rd G-d Almighty is its Sanctuary and the Lamb.” Revelation 21:22

When studying Haggai chapter 2, there are no less than five direct references to the 24th day of the ninth month. It is stated that this was the day on which the foundation for the Sanctuary was laid, (See Haggai 2:18). Regarding two of these references, the reader is commanded to pay attention to this day. This day would be the very day at nightfall when Hanukkah would begin. Hence, the second Festival which is mentioned in the prophecy of Haggai is indeed **Hanukkah**. There is also a reference to Hanukkah found in the book of Daniel.

וּמַעַת הַיּוֹסֵר הַתְּמִיד וְלִתֵּת שְׁקוּץ שִׁמְם יָמִים אֶלֶף מֵאָתַיִם וְתִשְׁעִים: אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיָּגִיעַ לַיָּמִים אֶלֶף שָׁלֹשׁ
מֵאוֹת שְׁלֹשִׁים וְחֲמִשָּׁה:

“And from the time that the daily sacrifice was removed and the giving of the Abomination of Desolation, 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits and arrives to 1,335 days.” Daniel 12:11-12

From these two verses, one learns that what causes the daily sacrifices to stop is the Abomination of Desolation. Based upon other verses in the Bible, one would expect the Abomination of Desolation to occur at 1,260 days. Hence, according to verse 11, there are an additional 30 days, $1,290 - 1,260 = 30$ days. In the Scriptures, the number 30 is associated with mourning, i.e., death. This means that from the Abomination of Desolation until the Second Coming of Messiah, there will be 1,260 days, **plus an additional 30 days**. What should one conclude from this information? At the Second Coming of Messiah towards the end of Daniel’s 70th week, Israel will recognize Who their Messiah is and will mourn Him for 30 days. This fact is supported by the Prophet Zechariah 12:10-14. These verses teach that at the Second Coming of Yeshua, Israel will mourn for the One Who has been pierced, i.e., crucified, like an only son and in the bitterness, like one mourns for a Firstborn son (See Zechariah 12:10).

What is most important about the prophecy from Daniel chapter 12 is the statement in verse 12, *“Blessed is the one who waits and arrives to 1,335 days.”* As has been previously stated, the expectation would be for 1,260 days. However, in this verse

there are actually an additional 75 days, $1,335 - 1,260 = 75$. When studying the Word of G-d, one learns that in Acts chapter 7:14, originally 75 people descended to Egypt.

ἀποστείλας δὲ Ἰωσήφ μετεκαλέσατο Ἰακώβ τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν συγγένειαν ἐν ψυχαῖς ἑβδομήκοντα πέντε,

“But after Joseph sent, he called Jacob, his father and all the family, seventy-five souls.

For what purpose did Joseph and his family go down to Egypt? The answer is so G-d could redeem them out of Egypt. Similarly, in Luke 3:23 it is stated,

Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος ὥσει ἐτῶν τριάκοντα, ὧν υἱός, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, Ἰωσήφ τοῦ Ἠλὶ

“And Yeshua Himself was about thirty years old when He began, being reckoned the son of Joseph of Heli.”

Since the number 30 relates to mourning and death, one learns from this verse the primary purpose G-d sent His Son into this world was to die in order to redeem all those who would receive Him by faith. It is important for everyone to understand that G-d's plan of redemption does not just involve the forgiveness of sins; but will also bring about a great change into this world, a Kingdom change. It is stated in Haggai 2:6,

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹד אֶחָת מַעַט הָיָא וְאֲנִי מַרְעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַחֲרֻבָּה׃
וְהָרַעַשְׁתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּבָאוּ חֲמֻדַּת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּמִלֵּאֲתֵי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה כְּבוֹד אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת׃

“For thus said the L-rd of Hosts, a little more and I will cause a noise in heaven and on the earth, and in the sea and on the dry land. And I will cause a noise among all the nations and they will come, with all the desired things of all the nations, I will fill this house (Temple) with glory, said the L-rd of Hosts.

In Haggai 2:21-22, the reader learns that this noise which G-d will make will bring about the overturning of the throne of the kingdoms of this world and He will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. Haggai's prophecy concludes with the words,

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֶקְרָא זָרְבָבֶל בֶּן־שָׁאֲלִיתַיֵּאל עַבְדִּי נֹאֵם יְהוָה וְשִׁמְתִּיךָ כְּחוֹתֶם כִּי־בָךְ בְּחֹרְתִי נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת׃

“On that day, declares the L-rd of Hosts, I will take Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel My servant, declares the L-rd, I will set him as a signet ring, for in you I have chosen, declares the L-rd of Hosts.”

Zerubbabel, in the book of Zechariah, is a typology for Israel's Messiah. This means that there is a Messianic expectation regarding the Messiah at Hanukkah. It would seem that Daniel 12:12 which states, *“Blessed is the one who waits and arrives to 1,335 days”* is referring to Messiah Yeshua, Who will establish His Kingdom after 1,335 days. The reason for stating, *“Blessed is the one who waits and arrives to 1,335 days”* relates to those who will enter into the Kingdom of G-d (Millennial Kingdom). It will be due to the wrath of G-d, which Yeshua will pour out, that there will be a great noise which will shake both the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. This noise will also destroy the kingdoms of the nations and replace them with the justice, righteousness and glory of the Kingdom of G-d.

With this understanding, I trust that this Hanukkah will be a most meaningful one.