

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"JESUS CELEBRATES HANNUKAH" | JOHN 10: 22-39 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What do most people associate with Hannukah?

"What Happened In-Between the Testaments?"

Pastor Brian gives a brief history of Greek conquest and then invasion by the Seleucid leader Epiphanes that was resisted by the Maccabees who were able to successfully restore the temple and were blessed by the miracle of lamp oil lasting 8 days instead of just 1, which is remembered with Hannukah. How can man-made holidays and traditions honor God?

"How Did Jesus Celebrate Hannukah?" (John 10: 22-39)

Jesus responds to the question of "Are you the Christ?" by saying I have told you and I have shown you through miracles from the Father. What has God the Father given you to be able to answer the question "Is Jesus the Son of God?"

"Why is this Important for Us to Know?"

Jesus used holiday of Hannukah to declare He and the Father are one, standing firm against opposition and being the light of world. How can believers today stand firm in their beliefs and be a light to their community?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian makes the point that Hannukah was created while the Seleucids were still ruling Israel, the festival of light was born during a very dark time. Are you waiting for a special time to shine God's light to others, or are you willing shine the light during tough times? Pray that God would give you courage to shine your light and for wisdom for how to do it.

Jesus Celebrates Hanukkah

11-28-21

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2-6 Lar: TY. Women's. Pantry. CFLC. CK Play.

B. Slide7 Prayer: Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness. Opened my eyes, let me see.

II. Intro: *Jesus Celebrates Hanukkah*

A. Hanukkah begins tonight at sundown and last for 8 days.

B. Best Historical records: 1st & 2nd Maccabees (which are Apocrypha books found only in the OT of the Catholic Bible). But stay w/me, Jesus does something very important on Hanukkah in the NT.

III. Slide8 **WHAT HAPPENED IN-BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS?**

A. Our story takes *in-between* the Old & New Testament (Intertestamental period) an approx 400 yr time period. [where God was quiet, well wasn't speaking thru prophets]

1. At the end of the OT (Malachi), Israel belonged to the Persian Empire. About a century later it was Greece.

a) Slide9a Alexander the Great swept through the land even as far as Egypt.

b) He was able to build a new world by introducing the Greek language & culture, Greek thought & philosophy. This was known as *Hellenization*. This became the language of the NT.

2. When Alexander died at age 33 for the next 150 years his successors (his 4 Generals) played tug-of-war for control of the empire.

3. Unfortunately Israel was stuck in the middle, between the anvil of Syria & the hammer of Egypt.

a) Israel was an important *land bridge* between the continents of Asia, Africa, & Europe. Control of Israel was a key to dominance in that region.

4. **4 Generals:** Cassander (Mac & Greece). Lysimachus (Thrace & Western Asia Minor). Seleucus (Syria & Asia Minor). Ptolemy (Egypt).

a) **Dan.7** prophecies after the *Babylon empire, Medo-persian, Greece, Rome.*

B. **Slide9b Later** a leader of Syria/Asia Minor by the name of **AntiOchus IV Epiphanes.**

1. **Θεὸς Ἐπιφανής** *manifest god or Illustrious One.* (which explains the size of his ego) [Syrian dynasty of the Seleucids]
2. The Jews called him **Epimandes** (play on Epiphanes) or **the Madman.**
3. **Slide10 Antiochus on a raid to get Egypt** were stopped & forced back. On the return to Syria while passing through **Israel** he ordered his generals to **destroy Jerusalem.** (175 – 163 bc)

a) They **murdered the High Priest, slaughtered 40,000** inhabitants of **Jerusalem.** All **sacrifices**, the service of the Temple, and the observance of the **Sabbath** and of **feast days** were **prohibited.** The **Temple** was dedicated to **Zeus**, the Holy **Scriptures** were destroyed and the Jews were forced to take part in heathen rites. In his attempt to destroy every trace of the Jewish religion, the final assault was **the slaughter of a pig** on the sacrificial altar of the Temple, thereby desecrating it.

C. **Slide11** Then the Syrian army **went even farther** erecting altars in different cities, having **Jews** sacrifice a pig & **then** commanded them to *eat its flesh ...* **Until ...** they ran into **Matityahu/Mattathias.**

1. In the city of **Modin** (17m. NW of Jer) they asked the gray haired Mattathias to eat the pigs flesh. He refused, **so an apostate Jewish priest** asked to do it. **Matt** grabbed the soldiers sword killed him **and the apostate,** **then** his 4 boys jump in killing the rest, & they and others flee to the Judean mountains.
2. This faithful band grew, engaging in **guerrilla warfare** against the Syrian army outposts. Matt's son **Judah** took over the campaign, he became known as **the Maccabee** (hammer).

D. **Slide12 Here's the miracle of Hanukah.** Syrian army 60,000+ soldiers, the Maccabean revolt a small rag tag group. **This was another David vs Goliath**

scenario **but** as in the story of David, **God** performed a miracle, and after a series of battles, the war was won!

1. Imagine their horror seeing the Temple for the 1st time in 3 years. Defiled, desecrated, & a huge statute to Zeus right in the middle.
2. **But** 3 years to the day when the Temple was defiled they were able to *cleanse & restore & rededicate* it.
3. **Slide13** They found 1 small cruse of unpolluted **oil** (for the lampstand) in an unbroken seal of the high priest. It was only 1 day's supply, **but** miraculously lasted for 8 days, **hence the 8 day feast of lights, or Hanukkah.**

E. Hanukkah, or the festival of lights, is *different* than the other festivals in the Bible.

1. This one was **NOT** a festival that **God** set up for **His people**, **but** one **His people** started in response for what **God** had done for them.

IV. **Slide14 HOW DID JESUS CELEBRATE HANUKKAH? (John 10:22-39) Read**

A. **Slide15** (22,23) **Explain:** Winter. Feast of Dedication.

B. Not only did Yashua celebrate Hanukkah, **but** he observed it in *the same temple* that had been miraculously **rededicated** by *the Maccabees* just a few generations earlier.

C. **Slide16** (24) *So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

1. There's no doubt behind that question that there are **2 attitudes of mind:** Those who generally *want to know*, **and** others are *asking as a trap*.
2. **Which are you?** See Jesus' **power** proved who He was. His **Words** proved it. His **deeds** proved it. **Raising Lazarus** proved it. **Raising Himself from the dead** proved it!
 - a) See, when you don't want to believe something, you can have *all the proof in the world* and you still won't believe it. **Not because** there's not adequate proof, **but because** *you've already made your mind up!*

D. (25) *Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.*

E. *Jesus responds with 2 things: I told you & I showed you.*

1. *When did He tell them?* Well both times it was in *private*. 1st to the Samaritan woman in Jn.4:26. The 2nd time to a man born blind Jn.9:37.

2. *When did He show them?* Every *miracle* he did was pointing to Him being the **Messiah**. *The eyes of the blind were opened, ears the deaf unstopped, the lame leapt like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sang for joy.* Isaiah 35:5,6.

a) *Jesus spent all of his days doing lovely things:* healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting this sorrowing. Deeds so full of *help and power and beauty* that they obviously came from God. *So for which of these do you want to stone me? - Oh it's not for any of these good works but because you being a man make yourself God.*

F. *Slide17 Jesus again responds with 2 things: others were called gods, your issue is with the Father!*

1. **You are gods** – from Ps.82:6 speaking of the **judges** (*Elohim*) of Israel.

a) Even the **judges** of Israel, acting as God’s representatives, were called *god’s*. They were commissioned by God to bring *truth & justice* in to the world. So they sat as **judges/lil gods** with great responsibility deciding, *“This I lives, this I dies, this I stays incarcerated.”* They have *god-like* powers.

b) The Jews should have seen that **Jesus** was far superior to those *judges*.

c) *What did Jesus do to celebrate Hanukkah?* Jesus told them plainly *He was God ... right in the middle of Hanukkah!* [those who believed *understood*; those who didn’t *boiled in anger*]

(1) Here’s this *man claiming to be God* just like Antiochus Epiphanes.

2. **The Father** - the father consecrated **Him** for *a special task*. **Consecrate** = to sanctify, make holy.

- a) This word **always** has the idea of rendering a **person** or a **place** or a **thing** different from other persons and **places** and **things**, because it is set aside for a special purpose or task.
- b) **i.e. The Sabbath** is **holy** in that it is different from the other days of the week. **The altar** was **holy**, it wasn't to be used as a bbq. **The priest** & **prophets** were **holy**, they were different from other men and separated for a special work in a special task.
- c) So Jesus saying that **the Father** **consecrated** **Him** meant that He was made **holy**, that He set him apart from other men, made him different from other men, and gave him a special task to do.

(1) It's right in the middle of the festival, of the people remembering the most holy place & the temple being **re-consecrated**, Jesus uses the same words and says that **He** is **consecrated** and set apart by the Father **just like** the **most holy place** and just like **the temple**. **Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in 3 days** Jn.2:19. **Then** in Mt.12:6 **I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple.**

- d) Jesus was **dispatched** from the Father into our world. He didn't see Himself as just **coming** into the world, **but** being **sent** into the world.
- e) Jesus is asking then, *How can you object that I call myself the son of God when I am the only one doing what Scripture said Messiah would do?*

3. **Slide18 Finally the Acid Test** - Jesus says in a sense, *I do not ask you to accept my words, but I do ask you to accept my **deeds***. A word is something one can argue about, **but** a **deed** is something to which there is no argument.

- a) If you won't believe me (my words) believe who I **am** and what I **do**. "I invite you to take the acid test, *the test of deeds*."

G. They missed **the teaching moment of Hanukkah** that Jesus used to point to His divinity. **Don't you miss it!**

V. Slide19 WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW?

- A. If there was no victory for the Jewish people, **then** we would have **no Messiah**.
- B. It was important to Jesus. And **John** made sure to mention **Jesus** was in attendance for multiple reasons:
1. It was not just a historical record, **but** has a theological message.
 - a) Just as God has **delivered** His people at the time of the Maccabees, Yashua **is *The Ultimate Deliver***.
 2. It's message is a reminder that it's especially relevant today.
 - a) It's a reminder we are called to stand firm on God's truth in the midst of all opposition. *We **don't bow to idols**, we **don't compromise our beliefs**.*
 - b) **And** as we learn about *the festival of lights* we are **reminded** we are called to **be *the light of the world***. **And** we are to reflect *the light, the love, the truth of Messiah*, to all the Nations.
- C. The story of Hanukkah is connected to the NT in that the Gospel of **Luke** **starts with** the story ***in the temple*** where an angel speaks to Zacharias (that his wife will give birth to *John the baptist*). *Couldn't happen w/o a temple!*

VI. Slide20 **HOW IS HANUKKAH CELEBRATED?** [3 ways]

- A. **Lighting The Hanukiah** (9 branch menorah) [temple menorah had 7]
1. 8 candles, 9th is the Shamash. (it stands higher, **aka** the servant/ attendant candle, used to light the other candles each night at sundown).
 2. **Then** it's placed in the window for all to see. *It's a reminder that **we are to be a light on a hill**.*
 3. **Note:** the Maccabees had **not** won their independence when they **proclaimed** the festival of Hanukkah. Antiochus was still the ruler, Syrian troops still occupied Israel/Jer. **The light of the first Hanukkah truly shone in the midst of the darkness**. In this sense, the light of Hanukkah, shining in the darkness, prophetically foreshadowed the **light** of the Messiah ...
Jn.1:5 *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

4. Both **Hanukkah** & **Christmas** look to the Messiah from 2 different perspectives: **Hanukkah** pointing to the footsteps of a delivery coming. **Christmas** pointing to His incarnation.

B. **Slide21** Playing the Dreidel Game (spinning top) [each family pick up 1 in the back]

1. נ Nun = Nes - A Great
2. ג Gimel = Gadol - Miracle
3. ה Hey = Hayah - Happened
4. ש Shin = Sham - There

a) Candy or coins in a pot, spin the dreidel, follow instructions.

5. *We have tables in the foyer with the dreidels, grab one per family.

C. **Slide22** Eating Fried Food! (Jelly Donuts & Latkes/potato pancakes)

1. Now I have your attention. Symbolic of the oil they found in the Temple, which was only enough for 1 day, miracle it lasted all 8 till they could prepare more oil.

D. **Prayer:** Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness. Opened my eyes, let me see. *Beauty that made this heart adore You. Hope of a life spent with You.*

E. Keywords: History, Jesus, Light, Restoration, sacrifice.