

# FAQ

**FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)**

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**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**  
messianicapologetics.net

# Frequently Asked Questions

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# Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*  
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*  
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)  
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  
Ara: Aramaic  
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)  
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)  
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.  
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)  
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*  
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)  
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)  
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)  
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)  
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)  
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls  
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*  
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*  
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)  
Ger: German  
GNT: *Greek New Testament*  
Grk: Greek  
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)  
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)  
Heb: Hebrew  
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible  
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*  
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*  
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*  
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*  
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)  
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)  
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*  
KJV: *King James Version*  
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)  
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)  
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)  
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)  
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)  
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)  
LXX: *Septuagint*  
m. Mishnah  
MT: *Masoretic Text*  
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)  
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)  
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*  
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)  
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*  
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)  
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*  
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)  
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)  
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)  
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)  
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)  
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)  
NT: *New Testament*  
OT: *Old Testament*  
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)  
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)  
t. Tosefta  
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament  
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*  
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*  
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)  
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)  
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*  
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*  
v(s). *verse(s)*  
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*  
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*  
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)  
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

# Chanukah, Eight Days of Oil

## Where can I find information about the menorah being lit for eight days, on one cruse of oil, following the Maccabees' rededication of the Temple?

The Maccabees drove the Seleucids out of the Land of Israel in the month of Kislev 165 B.C.E., which is in about the month of December. They had the task of cleaning up the mess which the Seleucids had left, notably in the city of Jerusalem and in the Temple complex. Antiochus' forces had completely ransacked the Temple and made it into a haven of idolatry. The Temple needed to be cleansed of its defilement and restored to its previous position so proper sacrifices could once again be performed. Of all of the items of Temple furniture which had to be cleansed and rededicated, one of the most important was the great lampstand or *menorah*. The *menorah* required special consecrated oil in order to be lit. Some historical traditions actually indicate that the Maccabees had to setup a "makeshift *menorah*" out of iron bars covered with zinc (Scholium to *Megillat Ta'anit*),<sup>1</sup> while a new gold *menorah* was being crafted.

The Festival of Dedication or *Chanukah*, as attested in the historical record, was mandated as a national celebration so that the community could remember the sacrifice of the Maccabees, and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem:

"Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with gladness and joy for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislew" (1 Maccabees 4:59, RSV).

The historian Josephus recorded how *Chanukah* was established as a new, national celebration for the Jewish people:

"Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days; and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon: but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them, by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs, when after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival" (*Antiquities of the Jews* 12.323-325).<sup>2</sup>

The Greek name for this holiday as recorded by Josephus was *phōta*, meaning "Lights." The connection of *Chanukah* to the lighting of the *menorah* goes all the way back to the First Century B.C.E. The Talmud tractates *b.Shabbat* 21b and 23a detail various *halachic* rulings from this period regarding the lighting of the *chanukia*, and debates between the Rabbinical Schools of Hillel and Shammai. These rulings date anywhere from 50-100 years before Messiah Yeshua.

The wonderful story which enlivens our *Chanukah* celebration concerns the fact that when the Maccabees were cleansing the Temple, only one cruse of consecrated oil was found to light the *menorah*. The Torah says that the oil used in the Tabernacle/Temple service was to be "clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp

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<sup>1</sup> Moshe David Herr, "Hanukkah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. MS Windows 9x. Brooklyn: Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Ltd, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Flavius Josephus: *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 328.

burn continually” (Exodus 27:20, NASU; cf. Leviticus 24:2), and the prevailing *halachah* of the day required eight days for this oil to be produced. While there was plenty of olive oil present to use in the Land of Israel, only special consecrated oil could be used for burning in the *menorah*. The miracle of the eight days of oil is spoken of in the Talmud, in the midst of the arguments about how the *chanukia* was to be lit:

*“What’s the point of Hanukkah? It is in line with what our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev the days of Hanukkah, which are eight, begin. On these days it is forbidden to lament the dead and to fast.*

*“For when the Greeks entered the sanctuary, they made all of the oil that was in the sanctuary unclean. But when the rule of the Hasmonean house took hold and they conquered them, they searched but found only a single jar of oil, lying with the seal of the high priest. But that jar had enough oil only for a single day. But there was a miracle done with it, and they lit the lamp with it for eight days. The next year they assigned these days and made them festival days for the recitation of Hallel psalms [Psa. 113-118] and for thanksgiving” (b.Shabbat 21b).<sup>3</sup>*

This story can be certainly deduced from the historical events recorded in 1-4 Maccabees, the writings of Josephus, and others. While some people today brand the miracle of the oil remaining lit for eight days as only a “legend,” the fact of the matter remains that Orthodox Jews, many Conservative Jews, and the vast majority of the Messianic Jewish community today, believe with some degree of faith that it actually happened. The challenge for some, particularly in the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, is the fact that many are unwilling to accept Jewish works like the Mishnah or Talmud as having any valid history (or for that same matter, the writings of the Church Fathers). Many are disrespectful to Jewish custom and tradition, and assert that it has no place in their interpretation and application of God’s Word. We believe that in the long run, this will bring more unnecessary disunity, than unity, among God’s people.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. MS Windows XP. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. CD-ROM.