

The Tabernacle

Sources on Hannukah

I Maccabees - Chapter 4

(36) Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary. (37) Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into mount Sion. (38) And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down; (39) They rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads, (40) And fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven.

(41) Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. (42) So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: (43) Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place. (44) And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; (45) They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, (46) And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them. (47) Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; (48) And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. (49) They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. (50) And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. (51) Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make.

(52) Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, (53) And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. (54) Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals. (55) Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success. (56) And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. (57) They decked also the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold, and with shields; and the gates and the chambers they renewed, and hanged doors upon them. (58) Thus was there very great gladness among the people, for that the reproach of the heathen was put away.

(59) Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.

II Maccabees - Chapter 10

(1) Now Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city: (2) But the altars which the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down. (3) 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. (4) 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. (5) Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu. (6) 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. (7) 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. (8) They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.

Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* – Book 12, Chapter 7

When therefore the generals of Antiochus's armies had been beaten so often, Judas assembled the people together, and told them, that after these many victories which God had given them, they ought to go up to Jerusalem, and purify the temple, and offer the appointed sacrifices. But as soon as he, with the whole multitude, was come to Jerusalem, and found the temple deserted, and its gates burnt down, and plants growing in the temple of their own accord, on account of its desertion, he and those that were with him began to lament, and were quite confounded at the sight of the temple; so he chose out some of his soldiers, and gave them order to fight against those guards that were in the citadel, until he should have purified the temple. When therefore he had carefully purged it, and had brought in new vessels, the candlestick, the table [of shew-bread], and the altar [of incense], which were made of gold, he hung up the veils at the gates, and added doors to them.

He also took down the altar [of burnt-offering], and built a new one of stones that he gathered together, and not of such as were hewn with iron tools. So on the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, which the Macedonians call Apeliens, they lighted the lamps that were on the candlestick, and offered incense upon the altar [of incense], and laid the loaves upon the table [of shew-bread], and offered burnt-offerings upon the new altar [of burnt-offering]. Now it so fell out, that these things were done on the very same day on which their Divine worship had fallen off, and was reduced to a profane and common use, after three years' time; for so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for three years. This desolation happened to the temple in the hundred forty and fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Apeliens, and on the hundred fifty and third olympiad: but it was dedicated anew, on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the month Apeliens, on the hundred and forty-eighth year, and on the hundred and fifty-fourth olympiad. And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eight years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some time].

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, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple 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. Judas also rebuilt the walls round about the city, and reared towers of great height against the incursions of enemies, and set guards therein. He also fortified the city Bethsura, that it might serve as a citadel against any distresses that might come from our enemies.

Megillat Antiochus – “The Scroll of Antiochus”

After this the House of Chashmonai came to the Beis HaMikdash and rebuilt the gates that had been smashed and repaired the breaches in the walls; they purified the courtyard from the corpses and the impurity. They tried to find clear olive oil with which to light the Menorah, but they could only find a single jar which was sealed with the signet ring of the Kohein Gadol. They knew that it was pure, but there was only enough oil to burn for a single day. The Lord of Heaven, Who causes His name to dwell there, gave a blessing to the oil and they lit from it for eight days.

The Babylonian Talmud – Shabbat 21b

The Gemara asks: What is Hanukkah, and why are lights kindled on Hanukkah? The Gemara answers: The Sages taught in Megillat Ta'anit: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the days of Hanukkah are eight. One may not eulogize on them and one may not fast on them. What is the reason? When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary by touching them. And when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame them and emerged victorious over them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was placed with the seal of the High Priest, undisturbed by the Greeks. And there was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day. A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it eight days. The next year the Sages instituted those days and made them holidays with recitation of hallel and special thanksgiving in prayer and blessings.