

The Tabernacle

Purim and Hanukkah

Lesson Overview

- These two feasts were established after the time of Moses.
- These have far more historical significance than spiritual.

Purim

- Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jews under Persian rule from the plot of Haman. Reese dates this to 510 B.C.
- Haman's plot was to attack the Jews on the 13th of Adar (Esther 3:13, 9:1). The Jews defended themselves on the 13th, and Esther was granted the same permission for the Jews in Shushan on the 14th (Esther 9:11-15). The Jews in other provinces celebrated their deliverance on the 14th (Esther 9:15) and those in Shushan on the 15th (Esther 9:18).
- *Purim* means "of lots", referring to the lots cast by Haman – Esther 3:7, 9:24.
 - It is called the "day of Mordecai" in II Maccabees 15:36
- Today it is observed on the 14th and 15th of Adar
 - In 2023 this will be March 16-17 and in 2024 will be March 23-24.
- The origin of the feast grew naturally out of the celebrations of the Jews at their deliverance from Haman's plot – Esther 9:15-19
- Mordecai proposed making this feast an annual occurrence – Esther 9:20-26
- The observance of Purim is more national/patriotic than religious.
- Observing Purim
 - "The Fast of Esther" is observed on the 13th of Adar
 - This is supposed to commemorate the fast in Esther 4:16, but that technically was three days long and much earlier in the year.
 - The Book of Esther is read publicly.
 - Since the 13th century A.D., some Jews use noise makers to "blot out" the 54 occurrences of Haman's name. This is inspired by Deuteronomy 25:19.
 - Sending food and gifts to friends – Esther 9:22
 - Giving charity to the poor – Esther 9:22
 - A festive meal – *Seudat Purim*
 - Drinking wine is the featured part of the meal
 - A 4th century rabbi called Rava wrote that the Jews should drink wine on Purim until they "no longer distinguish between *arur Haman* ("Cursed is Haman") and *baruch Mordechai* ("Blessed is Mordecai")."
 - Not all rabbis agree to that level of drunkenness, but all support drinking more than usual.

Hanukkah

- “The feast of the Dedication of the Temple.” *Hanukkah*, or *Chanukah*, means “dedication”.
 - It is called “the dedication of the altar” in I Maccabees 4:56 and “the Feast of Lights” by Josephus.
- It is celebrated for eight days, beginning on the 25th of Kislev until the 2/3 of Tevet.
 - In 2022 this will be November 28 to December 6, and in 2023 from December 7 to 15.
- This feast is mentioned in John 10:22.
- This feast has its origins in the recovery and rededication of the Jewish Temple from the Seleucids by Judas Maccabeus and his Jewish freedom fighters (a.k.a., the Maccabees) in 164 B.C.
- On celebrating this feast in the Second Temple Era, Edersheim writes: “On each of [the eight days] the ‘Hallel’ was sung, the people appeared carrying palm and other branches, and there was a grand illumination of the Temple and of all private homes.”
- It is observed that the ancient celebrations of Hanukkah and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) have many parallels.
 - The first celebration may have begun as a delayed observance of Sukkot, see II Maccabees 10:5-6
- The Miracle of the Oil
 - Edersheim - “Tradition, indeed, has it that when in the restored Temple the sacred candlestick was to be lit, only one flagon of oil, sealed with the signet of the high-priest, was found to feed the lamps. This, then, was pure oil, but the supply was barely sufficient for one day—when, lo, by a miracle, the oil increased, and the flagon remained filled for eight days, in memory of which it was ordered to illuminate for the same space of time the Temple and private houses.”
 - This event is not recorded in I or II Maccabees.
 - The earliest records of this event are found in the *Megillat Antiochus* (c. 200 A.D.?) and the Babylonian Talmud (c. 300 A.D.?)
 - Today, this is observed with lighting candles/lamps on a *menorah*.
 - *Menorahs* have nine branches.
 - The ninth branch is called the *shamash* (“helper or servant”). It differentiated from the others, often being higher and in the center.
 - The *shamash* candle is lit first and used to light one candle on the first night, two on the second, and so on.
 - The candles are lit at sundown, and they burn for about 30 minutes.
 - The *menorah* is to shine outside the home to be a witness of the miracle of the oil.
- Other modern traditions include eating foods that are fried or baked in oil, such as *latkes*, and children playing a game with a *dreidel*.