

K] Maccabees: Book One, Chapter Four:

36 Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary.

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 show 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 in the morning,

53 And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. 54 At the same time and day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it

dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals. **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.

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.

L] Josephus Antiquities Book XII chapter 8

7. 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...

M] How Xmas Come to Be Celebrated on December 25

www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/Christmas_TheRealStory.htm

A. Roman pagans first introduced the holiday of Saturnalia, a week long period of lawlessness celebrated between December 17-25. During this period, Roman courts were closed, and Roman law dictated that no one could be punished for damaging property or injuring people during the celebration...

B. The ancient Greek writer poet and historian Lucian (in his dialogue entitled *Saturnalia*) describes the festival's observance in his time. In addition to human sacrifice, he mentions these customs: widespread intoxication; going from house to house while singing naked; rape and other sexual license...

C. In the 4th century CE, Christianity imported the Saturnalia festival hoping to take the pagan masses in with it. Christian leaders succeeded in converting to Christianity large numbers of pagans by promising them that they could continue to celebrate the Saturnalia as Christians.

D. The problem was that there was nothing intrinsically Christian about Saturnalia. To remedy this, these Christian leaders named Saturnalia's concluding day, December 25th to be Jesus' birthday...

[Because of its known pagan origin, Christmas was banned by the Puritans and its observance was illegal in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681.]

[The Reverend Increase Mather of Boston observed in 1687 that "the early Christians who first observed the Nativity on December 25 did not do so thinking that Christ was born in that Month, but because the Heathens' Saturnalia was at that time kept in Rome,]

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף כא עמוד ב

ת"ר מצות חנוכה, נר איש וביתו
והמהדרין - נר לכל אחד ואחד
והמהדרין מן המהדרין - ב"ש אומרים: יום
ראשון מדליק שמנה מכאן ואילך פוחת והולך
וב"ה אומרים: יום ראשון מדליק אחת מכאן ואילך
מוסיף והולך ...

* מאי חנוכה דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי
דחנוכה תמניא אינון; דלא למספד בהון ודלא
להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל
השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי
ונצחום - בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן,
שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול. ולא היה בו אלא
להדליק יום אחד - נעשה בו נס, והדליקו ממנו שמונה
ימים! לשנה אחרת - קבעום, ועשאו ימים טובים
בהלל והודאה.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת עבודה זרה דף ח עמוד א

דף ח, א משנה: ואלו אידיהן של עובדי כוכבים
גמרא: אמר רב חנן בר רבא: קלנדא - ח' ימים
אחר תקופה; סטרנורא - ח' ימים לפני תקופה.
ת"ר לפי שראה אדם הראשון יום שמתמעט
והולך, אמר אוי לי שמא בשביל שסרחתי
עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו - וזו היא
מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים. עמד וישב ח'
ימים בתענית ובתפלה; כיון שראה תקופת טבת, וראה
יום שמאריך והולך - אמר: מנהגו של עולם הוא! הלך
ועשה שמונה ימים טובים.
לשנה האחרת עשאו לאלו ולאלו ימים טובים.
הוא קבעם לשם שמים, והם קבעום לשם עבודת
כוכבים.

H]. Talmud Bavli - Tractate Shabbat 21b

The rabbis taught: The law of Hanukah: **one candle** for each household. **Those who seek to fulfil it well**- one candle for each person. **Those who seek to fulfil the law in the best possible manner**: Beth Shamaï says- the first night light eight candles, and every following night one flame less. According to Beth Hillel [the reverse] -the first night one candle, and increased by one on each night...

***What is 'Hanukah?** The rabbis taught: "On the twenty-fifth day of Kislev Hanukah commences and lasts eight days, on which lamenting the dead and fasting are prohibited. When the Hellenists entered the sanctuary, they defiled all the oil. When the Hasmoneans prevailed and conquered them, oil was sought (to light the Menorah) and **only one vial was found with the seal** of the high priest intact. [Even though] the vial contained sufficient oil for one day only, a miracle occurred, and they lit from it for eight days. The following year - these 8 days were established as days of Praise and Thanksgiving.

J] Talmud Bavli- Tractate Avoda Zara 8b

MISHNA: These are the festivals of the heathens: *Kalends, Saturnalia...*

GEMARA: The rabbis taught: Adam [the first man], when he noticed that each day became shorter and shorter, he cried: Woe is to me, for the world becomes darker and darker - **because of my sin**, and it seems to be returning to 'chaos and ruin'; and this is my death which was decreed by heaven.

He arose and fasted and prayed eight days. Thereafter, he noticed the 'winter solstice', **as the days become longer**, he understood that such is the cycle of the world, and celebrated for eight days. The next year, he also proclaimed the eight days on which he had fasted as holidays. **He established them to laud heaven**; his descendants, however, made them holidays for the idols.