

Hanukkah Reconsidered

Why do people celebrate Hanukkah? And should we?

Around 332 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered the Land of Israel. A relatively gentle ruler, Alexander allowed the Jews to continue to practice traditional Judaism, so long as they paid him tribute (i.e. taxes).

Daniel 8:21-24

21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first (or chief) king (Alexander).

22 As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

In 323 BCE, some nine years after he had first conquered the Land of Israel, Alexander died. His empire then broke up into four kingdoms, fulfilling the prophecy in verse 22, above. One of these four successor kingdoms was the Seleucid Empire, which is located mainly in modern-day Syria. Next, verse 23 tells us that in the latter time of this (Seleucid) kingdom, a fierce, sinister king would arise, who would commit transgressions against the Hebrew people.

23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.

24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive. He shall destroy the mighty, and also the set-apart people.

Approximately a century and a half later, in 175 BCE, this prophecy was fulfilled. Antiochus Epiphanies (also called Antiochus IV) rose to power in the Seleucid Empire. Not religiously tolerant at all, Antiochus Epiphanies began to commit great atrocities against the Jewish people.

In approximately 168 BCE, Antiochus heard reports that there was a great deal of treasure stored up in the Temple. Returning from Egypt, he looted the Temple, and also slaughtered a great many of the Jews.

1st Maccabees 1:20-24

20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude.

21 And entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof.

22 And the table of showbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornaments that were before the Temple, all of which he pulled off.

23 He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found.

24 And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.

Two years later, Antiochus sent tax collectors to speak peaceable words to the people, so as to plunder the city through deception. Then after collecting their taxes they massacred the Jewish people, and used the money to set up a fortress within sight of the Temple Mount, to kill anyone who brought an offering.

1 Maccabees 1:29-40

29 And after two years fully expired the king sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Judah, who came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude,

30 and spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel.

31 And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side.

32 but the women and children they took captive, and possessed the cattle.

33 Then builded they the city of David with a great and strong wall, and mighty towers, and made it a strong hold for them.

34 And they put therein a sinful nation, wicked men, and fortified themselves therein.

35 They stored it also with armour and victuals, and when they had gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem, they laid them up there, and so they became a sore snare:

36 For it was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil adversary to Israel.

37 Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it:

38 insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those born in her; and her own children left her.

39 Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness, her feasts turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into reproach, her honour into contempt.

40 As had been her glory, so was her dishonour increased, and her excellency was turned into mourning.

Antiochus encouraged everyone in his empire to convert to the Greek religious system, and issued orders for the destruction of all dissenters.

1 Maccabees 1:41-50

41 Moreover King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people,

42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king.

43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the Sabbath.

44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda [Judea], that they should follow the strange laws of the land.

45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days:

46 And pollute the sanctuary and the holy people:

47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:

48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation:

49 To the end they might forget the Torah, and change all the ordinances.

50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he should die.

Between his incentives for Greek worship and penalties for YHWH worship, Antiochus was largely successful in getting many of the people to abandon the Torah.

1 Maccabees 1:51-53

51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda [Judea] to sacrifice, city by city.

52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit, every one that forsook the Torah; and so they committed evils in the land;

53 And drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour [relief].

Having courted those who had no zeal for the Torah, and persecuting YHWH's followers, Antiochus ordered a statue of Zeus to be erected in the Temple, and he commanded pigs to be sacrificed on the altar.

1 Maccabees 1:54-59

54 Now the fifteenth day of Kislev (the ninth month), in the hundred and forty fifth year, they set up the Abomination of Desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judea on every side.

55 And burnt incense at the doors of their homes, and in the streets.

56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire.

57 And wheresoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any consented to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should be put to death.

58 Thus they did by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities.

59 Now on the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of [Elohim].

The situation soon became very desperate. Mothers who circumcised their children were put to death, along with their children.

1 Maccabees 1:60-63

60 At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised.

61 They hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing.

63 Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died.

Mattithyahu ben Yochanan HaCohen and his five sons rebelled against Antiochus. Although Mattithyahu died a year later (from natural causes), his son Yehudah (Judah) continued to lead the Jewish rebellion with amazing bravery. Vastly outnumbered, the Jews placed their trust in YHWH, and YHWH gave them a miraculous victory against otherwise impossible odds. As a result, Yehudah and family became known as the 'Maccabees' (מכבי). This might be related to the Aramaic word for 'hammer', or it may be an acronym for the Jewish battle cry, "Mi Kamocha B'elim, YHWH" (who is like You among the elohim, YHWH?) (מכבי). Either way, after the Maccabean victory they needed to build a new altar to replace the one that had become defiled; and they also needed to re-light the Menorah, which YHWH commands to burn continually.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 24:1-2

24:1 Then YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:

2 "Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually.

Traditionally, it takes eight days to press and refine oil for the Menorah. While the Talmud tells us there was plenty of oil inside the Temple, it claims Antiochus' forces had defiled most of it, such that there was only enough set-apart oil to light the Menorah for one day: yet YHWH miraculously made it burn for eight.

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislew 22 [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. 23 For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean [Maccabean] dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, 24 but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel 25 and thanksgiving.26

[Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, Chapter 21]

YHWH certainly has the power to make miracles, but the Talmud (written 400-700 years after the war) claims that this alleged miracle is the reason for Hanukkah; yet this alleged miracle is not recorded in the Book of Maccabees (which was written soon after the war). Rather, First Maccabees says only that the Jews cleaned up the Temple, built a new altar, and re-lit the menorah. No eight-day miracle of burning is recorded.

1 Maccabees 4:47-51

47 Then they took whole stones according to the Torah, and built a new altar according to the former,

48 And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the Temple, and set the courts apart.

49 They made also new set-apart vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick (Menorah), 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.

Had one day's worth of oil really burned for eight days, it seems likely First Maccabees would have recorded it. Instead, First Maccabees tells us only that the re-dedication ceremony (חֲנֻכָּה, Hanukkah) lasted for eight days; and that Yehudah Maccabee commanded the people to keep this festival each year.

1 Maccabees 4:56-59

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 Yehudah and his brethren and the whole congregation of Israel ordained that the days of dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, with mirth and gladness.

Because the record in Talmud is not always reliable, and because the alleged miracle of the oil is not recorded in First Maccabees, some scholars believe the reason Hanukkah was established as an eight day festival was simply because the Jews had been unable to keep the Feast of Sukkot in its proper time (because of the war). Thus it may have been that when the war ended, the Jews simply celebrated a belated eight day festival to YHWH; and then they commanded that it be observed as a festival unto YHWH forever, much like the Fourth of July is celebrated in America.

What shall we say about man-made observances, such as Hanukkah and Purim? As with Christmas and Easter, the first thing we should admit is that these festival days are not commanded by YHWH: they are commanded by men. Yet YHWH warns us very clearly not to add anything to His Instructions, so that we might live, and be preserved in safety.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:1-4

1 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which YHWH Elohim of your fathers is giving you.

2 You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim which I command you.

3 Your eyes have seen what YHWH did at Baal Peor; for YHWH your Elohim has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor.

4 But you who held fast to YHWH your Elohim are alive today, every one of you."

The second thing we should recognize is that, as we saw earlier in this study, whoever's calendar we keep, that is essentially whom we worship (worth-ship). The reason we keep anyone's calendar is because we consider that person worthy to instruct us, as to what we should do. Yet YHWH is clear that we are not to follow man's instructions, but that we must only follow His Instructions. He tells us very plainly not to add to His Instructions: yet Hanukkah does this very thing.

It is clear that YHWH did not instruct us to keep either Hanukkah or Purim: men did. Yet since YHWH tells us to be careful not to add anything to His Instructions, then at least in one sense, if we keep Hanukkah or Purim, are we not being disobedient to His will? And might we not even be unwittingly guilty of esteeming these men as 'greater' than YHWH, since we are following their instructions, rather than YHWH's?

For a variety of reasons, Scripture indicates that men want to make up make their own festival days; but that this is never pleasing to YHWH, even when these festival days are purposed and intended to honor Him.

Shemote (Exodus) 32:5-6

5 So when Aharon saw it (the golden calf), he built an altar before it. And Aharon made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to YHWH!"

6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Winter light festivals are common among the pagan nations; and many of these festivals have been brought inside the Church (complete with candles). These include Advent (four weeks before Christmas), Saint Nicholas' Day (December 6th), Saint Lucia day (December 13th), the Winter Solstice and the Yule Log lighting. Pagan light festivals also include Samhain, Imbolc, and many others. Yet while it seems natural for men to want to celebrate light in the darkness of winter, YHWH tells us not to add any of these pagan light festivals to His calendar.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:29-32

29 "When YHWH your Elohim cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their elohim (g-ds)? I also will do likewise.'

31 You shall not worship YHWH your Elohim in that way; for every abomination to YHWH which He hates they have done to their elohim (g-ds); for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their elohim.

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

YHWH indeed gave a miraculous victory to the Jews in their war against Antiochus Epiphanies and the Seleucids, and nothing can ever take away from that. Yet there have been many other miraculous victories in Israel's history, such as when YHWH felled the wall at Jericho (Joshua 6), Gideon's miraculous victory over the Midianites (Judges 7), Shimshon's (Samson's) slaying of the Philistines (Judges 16), and many other miraculous victories. However, we do not add festival days to YHWH's calendar because of these other miracles; so why should we add to YHWH's calendar because He gave a victory against Antiochus Epiphanies or because of an alleged miracle with oil?

There is a counter-argument for Hanukkah. Those who advocate celebrating Hanukkah note that Yeshua was in Jerusalem at Hanukkah time, here called the Feast of Dedication.

Yochanan (John) 10:22-23

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.

23 And Yeshua walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

However, we should be careful to note that it does not say Yeshua was celebrating the Feast of Dedication: it simply states that He was in Jerusalem at that time, probably because He had stayed on in Jerusalem after Sukkot. This is not the same thing as celebrating it, or going up to Jerusalem for Hanukkah. He might well have been there for other reasons.

Those who advocate Hanukkah tell us that Hanukkah is traditionally celebrated by lighting candles, oil lamps, or other lights; and that it was during this same general time frame (during the Feast of Hanukkah) that Yeshua told us that He was the light of the world.

Yochanan (John) 8:12

12 Then Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Yeshua also says the same thing in John Chapter 9.

Yochanan (John) 9:5

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Yet neither of these passages prove that Yeshua either celebrated, or approved of Hanukkah. We might easily imagine Yeshua telling those who went up for the festival to look to Him, rather than to the Hanukkiah.

Interpretation:

Then Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, "The Hanukkiah is not the light of the world, so why do you look to it? I am the light of the world (not the Hanukkiah)! He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life!"

We might compare this with His words to the Woman at the Well, where Yeshua told her that He could give her Living Waters: yet the purpose was not to celebrate the waters or the well, but Him.

Yochanan (John) 4:13-14

13 Yeshua answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

We might also imagine Yeshua's words this way:

Interpretation:

"You are celebrating a Winter Light Festival: but why do you do that? For as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world! So why do you focus on the light from a Hanukkiah?"

There is an argument which suggests that Yeshua may have been conceived during Hanukkah; and yet we should note that this argument does not prove that Yeshua was conceived during Hanukkah. Further, even if it did prove it, this still does not provide us with justification for adding to YHWH's calendar. The basic rule is that we human beings are not worthy to add or subtract from the Almighty's Instructions. We are not wise enough, and we are not authorized: yet we human beings seem to want to do this, time and again.

While we will not list the whole citation here, First Chronicles 24:7-19 tells us that the Levitical priesthood was separated into twenty-four divisions, and that their schedule of service was then chosen by lot.

Divre HaYamim Aleph (1st Chronicles) 24:1a, 3, 5-19

1 Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron....

3 Then David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service....

5 Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of Elohim, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar.

In Antiquities 7, Josephus tells us that each division served for a period of one week.

365 He divided them also into courses: and when he had separated the priests

from them, he found of these priests twenty-four courses, sixteen of the house of Eleazar, and eight of that of Ithamar; and he ordained that one course should minister to [Elohim] eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath. 366 And thus were the courses distributed by lot, in the presence of David, and Zadok and Abiathar the high priests, and of all the rulers: and that course which came up first was written down as the first, and accordingly the second, and so on to the twenty-fourth; and this partition has remained to this day. [Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 7:365-366 (Alt: VII 14:7)]

Those wishing to verify Josephus' summation from Scripture alone should reference 1st Chronicles 9:1-26, 1st Chronicles 28:11-14 and 2nd Chronicles 23:1-8. However, since Josephus' summation is so much shorter and more compact, we will not reproduce all of these passages here.

Luke tells us that Yochanan HaMatbil's (John the Baptist's) father Zechariah was of the priestly division of Aviyah (Abijah).

**Luqa (Luke) 1:5
5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Aviyah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisheva.**

We know from 1st Chronicles 24:10 that the division of Aviyah served in the eighth week.

**Divre HaYamim (1 Chronicles) 24:7-10
7 Now the first lot fell to Yehoiariv, the second to Yedaiah,
8 the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,
9 the fifth to Malchiyah, the sixth to Miyamin,
10 the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Aviyah....**

Since the priestly courses began at the Head of the Year, and since the priests served from Sabbath to Sabbath, and since Zechariah belonged to the eighth priestly division, Zechariah would have served in the Temple from the eighth week of the year, to the ninth. However, since all the priests served in the Temple during the three annual pilgrimage festivals, and since Shavuot (Pentecost) was in the ninth week, Zechariah would not have gone home right away, but would have stayed at the Temple, returning home after Shavuot was over. Luke 1:23-24 confirms this, and it tells us that Zechariah's wife Elisheva (Elisabeth) conceived after Zechariah had returned home.

**Luqa (Luke) 1:8-25
8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before Elohim in the order of his division,
9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the Temple of YHWH.**

10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

11 Then a messenger of YHWH appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zechariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the messenger said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elisheva will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Yochanan.

14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15 For he will be great in the sight of YHWH, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Set apart Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to YHWH their Elohim.

17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Eliyahu, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for YHWH."

18 And Zechariah said to the messenger, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

19 And the messenger answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of Elohim, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

21 And the people waited for Zechariah, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.

22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

23 So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying,

25 "Thus YHWH has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

It would have taken Zechariah some time to get home, so if we add nine months to the date of Yochanan's conception (perhaps in the middle of the third month), we can see that Yochanan would likely have been born in the spring, right around the Passover time frame (in the middle of the first month). [Those who obey the rabbinical rituals may find this more than a coincidence, since one of the rabbinical rituals is to set a special place setting for Eliyahu (Elijah), who Yochanan came in the power and the spirit of.]

Continuing onward, verse 36 tells us that Gabriel spoke with Miriam during the sixth month of Elisheva's term.

Luqa (Luke) 1:26-38

26 Now in the sixth month the messenger Gabriel was sent by Elohim to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Yosef, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Miriam.

28 And having come in, the messenger said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, YHWH is with you; blessed are you among women!"

29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

30 Then the messenger said to her, "Do not be afraid, Miriam, for you have found favor with Elohim.

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Yeshua.

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and YHWH Elohim will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34 Then Miriam said to the messenger, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35 And the messenger answered and said to her, "The Set apart Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Set apart One who

is to be born will be called the Son of Elohim.

36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

37 For with Elohim nothing will be impossible."

38 Then Miriam said, "Behold the maidservant of YHWH! Let it be to me according to your word." And the messenger departed from her.

Continuing onward, verse 39 tells us that Miriam left Nazareth 'with haste' to go visit Elisheva. We can surmise that Miriam was already pregnant at that time because Elisheva, filled with the Set-apart Spirit, blessed the fruit of Miriam's womb (i.e., Yeshua).

Luqa (Luke) 1:39-45

39 Now Miriam arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

40 and entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elisheva.

41 And it happened, when Elisheva heard the greeting of Miriam, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisheva was filled with the Set-apart Spirit.

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Master should come to me?

44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from YHWH."

Even though Miriam left 'with haste', back in the days of transportation on foot and by camel, it would still have taken her some time to travel from Nazareth in the north, to Judea in the south. Thus, even though Yochanan HaMatbil was probably conceived about the middle of the third month, Yeshua was likely conceived around the end of the ninth month. Some argue that this may have been about the same time as Hanukkah begins, more-or-less the 25th day of the 9th month. Thus it can be argued that YHWH used Hanukkah to give us yet one more prophetic shadow picture of the One who would become the Light of the world; yet we should be clear that this is by no means proven: and even if it were, it still does not give us justification to add to the Almighty's Instructions.

Why do we keep Hanukkah? The rabbis teach that it is because there was an eight-day miracle of oil that the Book of First Maccabees does not witness to.

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev 22 [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. 23 For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean [Maccabean] dynasty prevailed against

and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, 24 but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel 25 and thanksgiving.26

[Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, Chapter 21]

In contrast, the Book of First Maccabees tells us that it is because Judah Maccabee and his brethren told us to do so.

1 Maccabees 4:59

59 Moreover Yehudah and his brethren and the whole congregation of Israel ordained that the days of dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, with mirth and gladness.

Yet as much as we might want to respect the person of Judah Maccabee and the other war heroes to whom YHWH gave such a great victory, it would be a mistake to value and esteem their word over the Instructions of the One who gave the victory.

It is a mistake to keep Hanukkah.