

נתיב האמת

# Netiv HaEmet

The Path of Truth

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 Hanukkah 2024 Edition

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General Editor

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Contributor

## Welcome to *Netiv HaEmet*

We hope that you enjoyed our launch issue of *Netiv HaEmet* in October, commemorating the tragedy of October 7, 2023 and lamenting the subsequent rise of antisemitism around the world. As we begin the celebration of the Festival of Lights, we continue to pray for the release of the hostages and a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors.

For this Hanukkah-themed issue, we hope you will be pleasantly surprised by the relevance of the holiday to both Jews and Christians. Did you know that one of the earliest records of the holiday is found in the New Testament, with Jesus himself visiting Jerusalem to celebrate Hanukkah?

This issue's feature article unearths a century-old rallying cry for Messianic Jews to be inspired by Hanukkah to live boldly as *Jewish* believers in Jesus. This Hanukkah theme gives bold encouragement to listen to the teachings of the New Testament about the importance of Jews remaining Jews after coming to faith in the Messiah Yeshua.

The remaining slate of this issue's articles investigate the themes of Hanukkah and Christmas, illustrating a fascinating connection between the two holidays. Our team considers ancient Jewish texts, the New Testament, and the story of the Maccabean revolt, each of which have relevance to the Messiah of Israel.

We've also included a quiz in the Quick Takes section of this issue - so read closely, and see how you do!

May you have a blessed Hanukkah season with your family and community.

Brian J. Crawford, DMin  
*Netiv HaEmet* General Editor  
December 2024

# THE SPIRIT OF HANUKKAH IN MESSIANIC JUDAISM

“**W**hat shall be said of those Jewish Christians who, having had their hearts and minds awakened, are, like the Maccabaeans of old, fired with zeal and ardour, and seek tenaciously to cling to their Jewish national identity.”

These are words on the opening page of the December 1910 issue of *The Messianic Jew: Organ of the Jewish Messianic Movement*, Volume 1, Issue 1.

The same conviction that motivated the Maccabees to fight against assimilation in ancient Greece and to remain faithful to their covenant with God motivated Messianic Jews over 110 years ago and continues to motivate us today.

## Israel, A Resilient Nation

God instructs the Jewish people to remain set apart and distinct from the nations of the world and to be a light to the nations so they can see God work miracles through the small people of Israel. We resist assimilation because

that is the nature of being a Jew.

Later in that issue of *The Messianic Jew*, Jewish follower of Yeshua, Dr. A. Waldman wrote, “The Jew is the survival of an antiquity which has outlived the Pharaohs, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Grecians, etc. His nationalism is part and parcel of himself and the heritage of the heroic past, with its possible future.”

Being a Jew is to persist. It is to persist through persecution, through hardship, through periods in the wilderness and famine. In doing so, the world sees that our God sustains us. We will outlive the great powers of this world, not because of our strength, but because of the strength and the faithfulness of the God of Israel.

## Jewish Identity in Messiah

This attitude of resilience remains in the hearts of Jews who follow Yeshua as the Messiah. For us, following Yeshua strengthens our commitment to Jewish identity and to encouraging Jews around us to likewise commit to their Jewish identities.



Title page of *The Messianic Jew*, Johannesburg, South Africa, December 1910



Not only does this attitude come from the conviction God has given us as Jews but it is reinforced in the teachings of the New Testament by the famed Jewish thinker, Paul the apostle. In 1 Corinthians 7:17–20, Paul wrote, “Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the congregations. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.”

Paul wrote this instruction less than 200 years after the Maccabees resisted the assimilation efforts of Antiochus Epiphanes, who tried to force the Jewish people to literally “uncircumcise” themselves (this was a medical procedure called epispasm). Some Jews compromised and obeyed the ruler. In 1 Maccabees 1:14–15, we read, “So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant.”

Paul took up the same cause as the Maccabees when he insisted that Jewish followers of Yeshua remain circumcised and “not remove the marks of circumcision.”

Gentile believer Dr. E.F. Stroeter wrote the following to Jews who follow Messiah in *The Messianic Jew*,

*“You are to testify, in word and deed, that faith in the once rejected Messiah does not diminish or forfeit, in any degree or sense, your rightful share in all the hopes and aspirations of your nation, based on the oath-bound promises of God to the fathers. Your very title to the name, ‘Israel of God’ is secured through faith in Jesus. You owe just this testimony to your blessed Lord as the true and only Messiah of your nation. Millions of Gentiles can bear witness to His saving power and grace. You alone can and must uphold His claim upon your nation.”*<sup>1</sup>

### The Messiah Serves Israel and the Nations

The New Testament teaches that the Jewish people should remain distinct from the nations because Israel remains set apart from the nations, and remaining set apart will bring God glory. There are still promises and prophecies yet to be fulfilled that depend on Israel remaining visibly set apart from the nations. Romans 15:7–10 says,

*Therefore accept one another just as Messiah has also accepted you, to the glory of God. For I declare that Messiah has become a servant to the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His*

*mercy. As it is written, ‘For this reason I will give You praise among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name.’ And again, it says, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.’*

Messiah Yeshua serves Israel and the nations to bring a renewed harmony between them. Yeshua serves Israel to show that God has been truthful in His promises to bring a Messiah and to confirm the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, namely, that Abraham will be the father of many nations and that one day Israel and the nations will be united together in peace (Isaiah 2:2–4).

### A Future Peace Through Messiah

For these prophecies to be fulfilled, all Jews—especially those who follow Yeshua as Messiah—must fulfill God’s calling to be set apart from the nations. Then, the world will see God’s promises to Israel confirmed, and the nations will come alongside Israel in worshipping the one true God.

While the tragedy of conflict between Israel and the nations predates the Maccabees and continues today, tragically even by the institutional Church itself, there will be a day when Messiah Yeshua, the Light of the World, performs a miracle that we did not see during Hanukkah. He will return and bring perfect peace and reconciliation between Israel and the nations. ♦



1 Stroeter, *The Messianic Jew*, 7.



# THE JEWISHNESS OF A DIVINE MESSIAH

**T**his is the season of wintertime magic. Whimsical carols fill the air. Families bundle up inside. Hot cocoa warms our mugs as snow blankets the ground. Enchantment and serenity are the promises of the season. Even so, in our culture, the magic is intertwined with Christmas—the holiday for Christians to celebrate the coming of Jesus. Try as we might, the spirit of Hanukkah has a hard time competing.



Some of you are in mixed marriages, so you're comfortable with the two holidays during this season. You may even sneak a tree into your house! But for most Jewish people, Christmas is for Christians, not for Jews.

Did you know that the Incarnation, the main idea that drives the holiday of Christmas, has deep roots in ancient Jewish thought? You might be surprised to learn that the concept of a divine Messiah was not foreign to previous Jewish generations. In fact, some contemporary Jewish scholars argue that the belief in God becoming human (the Incarnation) is deeply rooted in early Judaism. God being with us in physical form may actually be a Jewish idea. Let's explore how this fascinating concept connects back to this rich heritage.

## The Messiah: A Divine Figure?

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Messiah is often described as a king who will save Israel and bring peace to the world. But what if I told you that some ancient Jews believed the Messiah would be more than just a human leader? They thought he might actually be divine!

## The Angel of the LORD: A Divine Messenger

In the Hebrew Scriptures, one of the most intriguing passages that hints at a divine Messiah is found in Exodus 23:20–21. In this passage, God speaks to Israel during her wandering in the desert, saying,

*Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.*

This passage describes an angel who bears God's name and has the authority to forgive or punish. Who is this angel?

## The Name of God

The key phrase "my name is in him" from Exodus 23:20–21 is crucial. In Jewish tradition, the name of God is set apart and holy. It represents God's presence and power. His name is so bound together with his holiness that observant Jews do not even pronounce it. When the angel bears God's name, it signifies that he bears God's divine nature. Jewish mysticism scholar Moshe Idel comments,

*No real separation between the divinity and the emissary is assumed; rather, the divinity is dwelling within the emissary by means of the name.<sup>1</sup>*

This concept of a divine emissary who bears God's name was well understood in ancient Jewish thought and provides a foundation for understanding the idea that Jesus could be God in the flesh.

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1 Moshe Idel, *Ben*, 17.

## The Angel of the LORD as a Divine Representative

The angel of the LORD appears multiple times in the Hebrew Bible, often in significant moments of divine interaction. For example, this angel appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and other Israelites, delivering messages and performing acts that only God could do (Gen 18; 31; Exod 3). The Talmudic rabbis often called this angel Metatron, and they associated him with divine attributes (b. Sanh. 38b; 3 Enoch). This has led many Jewish scholars to interpret the angel of the LORD as a manifestation of God himself.



*The pillar of fire during the exodus*

## Jewish Scholars on the Divine Messiah

Many contemporary Jewish scholars recognize these ancient roots and their connection to Christian theology. Daniel Boyarin, a prominent Jewish scholar, writes:

*The reasons that many Jews came to believe that Jesus was divine was because they were already expecting that the Messiah/Christ would be a god-man. This expectation was part and parcel of Jewish tradition.*<sup>2</sup>

Jewish theologian Phillip Sigal writes,

*The originators of Christianity were Jews, and they found their notion of a divine Messiah in their own heritage.*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2012), 56. Emphasis in original.

<sup>3</sup> Phillip Sigal, "Further Reflections on the 'Begotten' Messiah," *Hebrew Annual Review* 7 (1983), 223.

Jewish scholar Esther Hamori agrees:

*The Christian concept of incarnation has its roots in Israelite thought.*<sup>4</sup>

Jewish biblical scholar Benjamin Sommer writes,

*No Jew sensitive to Judaism's own classical sources, however, can fault the theological model Christianity employs when it avows belief in a God who has an earthly body as well as a Holy Spirit manifestation, for that model, we have seen, is a perfectly Jewish one.*<sup>5</sup>

These scholars suggest that the idea of a divine Messiah was not a radical departure from Jewish thought but an unfolding of it.

## The Christmas Connection

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, whom Christians and Messianic Jews believe is the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. According to the New Testament, God fulfilled his promise by becoming human and dwelling among Israel. This is why the Gospel of John states:

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).*

When we understand the ancient Jewish roots of these ideas, Christmas can be seen as a holiday which, at its core, is celebrating what is found within the rich heritage of Judaism rather than a foreign concept.

## Embracing an Ancient Theme

We can see that the idea of God becoming human is not alien to Judaism. It's part of the Jewish story, a story that connects us to the divine in profound ways. The ancient belief in a divine Messiah opens up new possibilities for understanding God's presence and action in the world. It invites us to consider how God might be working through unexpected means to bring about redemption and peace. ♦

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<sup>4</sup> Esther J. Hamori, "Divine Embodiment in the Hebrew Bible and Some Implications For Jewish and Christian Incarnational Theologies," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. S. Tamar Kamionkowski (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2010), 180.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 135.

# YESHUA'S HANUKKAH DECLARATIONS OF HIS IDENTITY

In the cold winter of Jerusalem, amid the Festival of Lights, Yeshua stood in Solomon's Colonnade on the eastern side of the Temple, surrounded by curious and confrontational listeners. The setting was Hanukkah (the Feast of Dedication), the festival commemorating God's miraculous deliverance of the Jewish people from the persecution of the evil Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and the Temple's rededication to God. Yeshua intentionally used this moment to reveal profound truths about His identity to His Jewish audience.



Yeshua's Jewish disciple, Yochanan (John), captured this pivotal encounter in his account:

*At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jewish leaders gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."*

*Yeshua answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my*

*sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."*

*The Jewish leaders picked up stones again to stone him. Yeshua answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"*

*The Jewish leaders answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." (John 10:22–33)*

Here Yeshua chose the backdrop of Hanukkah to reveal two important truths of His identity: the fact He is both Messiah and God.

## **Messiah: The Long-Awaited Deliverer**

During Yeshua's time, Messianic expectations were high. Many Jewish people, especially the Zealots, interpreted the Jewish prophet Daniel's prophecy about the Messiah to mean the Messiah had to arrive during their time, especially before the destruction of the Second Temple (Daniel 9:24–27; cf. Josephus, *Wars* 6.312). In addition, the heavy-handed Roman occupation of Israel further intensified Jewish anticipation of their deliverer. They yearned for a Messiah who would liberate them from oppression, similar to how the Maccabean revolt liberated them from the evil rule of the Seleucid Empire several hundred years earlier.

But unlike the political liberator many anticipated—a conquering king who would immediately overthrow Roman rule—Yeshua came as a humble servant to atone for Israel's sin and bring peace between her and God, as the Jewish prophets foretold. The prophet Zechariah wrote that Israel's Messiah would first come as a lowly servant, riding on a donkey: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).



The prophet Daniel wrote that He would return in power, riding on the clouds of heaven:

*“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom” (Daniel 7:13–14).*

Yeshua fulfilled the words of the prophet Zechariah as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, while people shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Matthew 21:9). Later that same week, Yeshua also fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah, who prophesied that the Messiah would suffer and die to atone for sin at His first coming, before returning to reign as king at His second coming:

*We [Isaiah’s people Israel] esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his sounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4–6).*

Knowing His mission would not yet be understood, given the Messianic expectations of His day, Yeshua often instructed people not to publicly proclaim His messianic identity early in His ministry. When challenged on Hanukkah by the Jewish leaders to declare plainly whether He was the Messiah, Yeshua responded, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep” (John 10:25–26). Yeshua affirmed that He had already told them and declared by His works that He was Messiah.

Yeshua’s ministry was one marked by the works and miracles prophesied of the Messiah. He made the blind see, made the lame walk, cleansed lepers, made the deaf hear, raised the dead, and evangelized the poor, as the prophet Isaiah foretold (Isaiah 11:1–2; 29:18; 35:5–6; 61:1–2; cf. Mat-

thew 11:4–5). Most importantly, His earthly ministry concluded with His atoning death for sin and His resurrection, likewise prophesied of the Messiah (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Daniel 9:24–27).

At Yeshua’s Second Coming, He will fulfill the prophecies concerning Messiah’s defeat of Israel’s enemies and the Messianic age of peace (Zechariah 12:9–10; Isaiah 2:2–4; 19:23–25; Daniel 7:13–15).

### God in the Flesh

The most controversial moment of Yeshua’s declarations on Hanukkah came when Jesus boldly proclaimed, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). His statement echoed the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” By positioning Himself in this context, Yeshua was making an explicit claim to divinity that His Jewish audience immediately understood.

The Jewish leaders considered Yeshua’s declaration to be one with the Father as blasphemy and prepared to stone Him. Just as the religious leaders missed the Scripture’s description of Messiah’s mission to atone for sin, they likewise missed its description of His divine identity. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the coming Messiah would be God in the flesh: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6[5]).

Yeshua’s claim was particularly pointed during Hanukkah. Antiochus IV desecrated God’s temple and called himself “Epiphanes,” which literally means, “god manifest.” Yeshua presented Himself in God’s temple as the true manifest God and the Good Shepherd who came to love and save His sheep, the people of Israel.

This Hanukkah, we invite you to think about Yeshua’s claims about Himself that He made more than 2,000 years ago during this Festival of Lights. We believe the Jewish Scriptures point to the fact He is indeed who He claimed to be, Messiah and the God of Israel. Who do you say that He is? ♦

**Hanukkah is the only major Jewish festival that does not originate in the Hebrew Bible. It commemorates an event described outside the Bible, but outlined extensively in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Otherwise, Hanukkah is mentioned only once in the New Testament when the festival coincided with Jesus’ visit to Jerusalem (John 10:22).**

—The Lexham Bible Dictionary



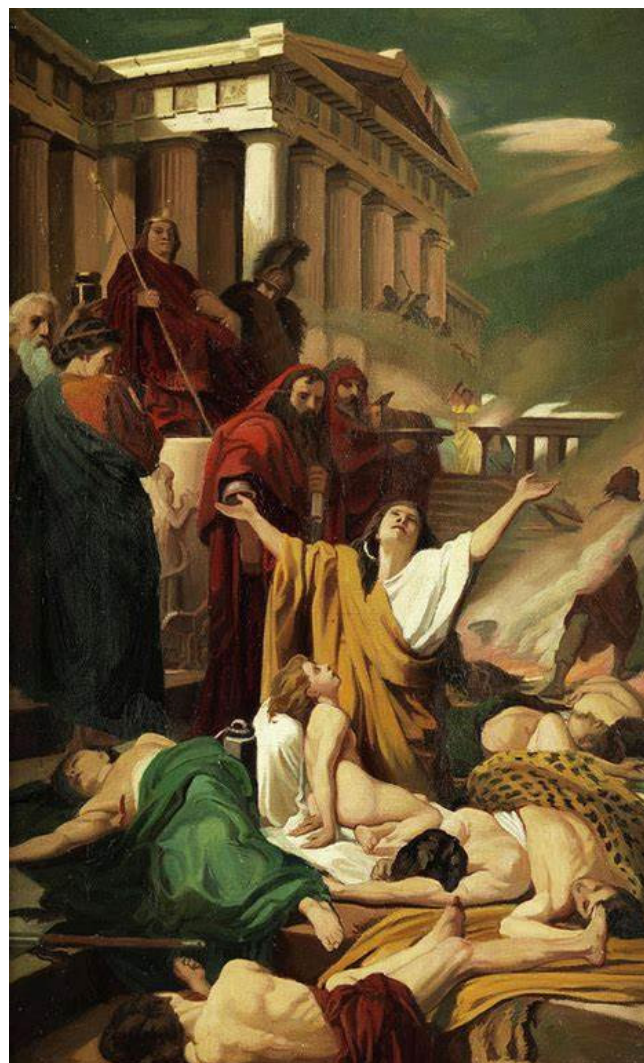
# ATONEMENT WITHOUT A TEMPLE: MACCABEAN MARTYRS AND YESHUA

Christians often say, “Jesus died for your sins,” a statement that may seem at odds with Jewish beliefs about how our sins are forgiven. But what if I told you that Hanukkah reveals a deeper connection, showing that there is a concept in Jewish tradition that the death of the righteous atones for the sins of Israel.

During Hanukkah, we remember a pivotal moment in our history when our enemies sought to annihilate us, yet God kept His promise to preserve His people. Antiochus IV (c. 265–164 BCE) attempted to eradicate Judaism by outlawing Jewish practices and brutally murdering those Jews who continued to keep the commandments (2 Maccabees 6:7–11). Antiochus stopped Israel’s priests from purifying the Temple and the people through the sacrifices prescribed in the Torah so that God’s presence could dwell with Israel (Leviticus 16:14–22). Antiochus struck at the heart of the Jewish people by desecrating the Jerusalem Temple, sacrificing pigs on God’s altar, and dedicating God’s holy dwelling place to Zeus (2 Maccabees 6:1–5). By defiling the Temple, Israel was unable to offer sacrifices that atone for sin. Antiochus compelled Jewish people to forsake their allegiance to God by forcing them to eat pork, and he brutally tortured and murdered those Jewish people who refused. How did the people of Israel respond?

One devout Jewish leader, Eleazar, rejected Antiochus’s command and as a result faced brutal torture: “His flesh was being torn by scourges, his blood flowing, and his sides were being cut to pieces” (4 Maccabees 6:6). As he was dying, Eleazar declared, “You know, O God, that though I could have saved myself, I am dying in these fiery torments for the sake of the law. Be merciful to your people and let our punishment be a satisfaction on their behalf. Make my blood their purification and take my life as a ransom for theirs” (4 Maccabees 6:27–28). Eleazar’s plea was for God to use his blood to atone for Israel’s sins, for his blood to purify the people, offering his life to be taken in exchange for his people.

Similarly, a mother and her seven sons also suffered torture and death for remaining faithful to God during the



Antonio Ciseri, *Martyrdom of the Seven Maccabees*, 1863

Maccabean revolt. The author of 4 Maccabees described the Jewish martyrs as “a ransom for the sin of our nation. And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been mistreated” (4 Maccabees 17:20–22).

Their deaths were viewed as an atoning sacrifice that preserved Israel through divine providence. The solution these martyrs sought for atonement in the absence of the

Temple was to ask God to accept their deaths as a “ransom for the sin of our nation,” and their blood as an “atoning sacrifice.” Jewish scholar Géza Vermes comments,

*In the passages quoted from IV Maccabees, the self-offering of the martyrs is considered as an atonement for the sins of Israel, and the life of the just is offered as a ransom for sinners. By offering his life in expiation, the martyr imitates Isaac.*

This is the context for what we celebrate during Hannukah—the Maccabees’ victory over our oppressors and the rededication of the Temple, restoring the sacrificial system and allowing Jewish people to freely live as Jews.

Why did these martyrs ask God for their blood to be given up as a ransom for Israel’s sins? The significance of blood atonement is found in Leviticus 17:11, where God says, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.” The Maccabean martyrs recognized the need for atonement and offered their lives for this purpose. This concept is echoed in later rabbinic literature (b. Mo’ed Qatan 28a; Leviticus Rabbah 20:12), as well as in Jewish literature that is unfamiliar to many Jewish people—the New Testament.

The New Testament recounts another defilement of the Temple, this time by a group of scribes and Pharisees. Jesus rebuked this group of Jewish leaders,

*I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar” (Matthew 23:34–35).*

Jesus informed Israel’s leaders that they are guilty of committing bloodshed in the Temple, which according to the Torah defiles this sacred space (Numbers 35:34–35; cf. b. Yoma 9b). Jesus lamented over Jerusalem and the Temple, saying,

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate” (Matthew 23:37–38).*

Yeshua signaled God’s presence leaving the Temple by departing to the Mount of Olives, just as God’s presence left the first temple before its destruction (Ezekiel 11:23).

Yeshua’s solution for Israel’s atonement without a Temple was to offer himself as the atoning sacrifice, reconciling Israel to God and enabling God’s presence to dwell with His people. Yeshua explained that as the Messiah, he “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28, cf. 26:26–28). Yeshua, whose name means “the LORD saves,” came to save Israel from her sins, confirming God’s covenant with Israel—offering himself as the atoning sacrifice.

Moreover, Yeshua did not simply die; God raised him from the dead, validating his messianic identity and the effectiveness of his sacrifice. Atonement and fellowship with God can be accessed by those who put their trust in Yeshua. He will return to reign on David’s throne in Jerusalem, and yet, he is still faithful to offer access to God’s presence today as we mourn the destruction of our holy Temple. The God who was faithful to us during Hanukkah continues to be faithful to us today. Am Yisrael Chai! ♦



## The Bible, Prophecy, and History

In the first century, after describing Antiochus’s destruction of the Temple, Jewish historian Josephus asserted that the prophet Daniel predicted the rededication of the Temple that we remember during Hanukkah. In *Antiquities of the Jews* 7.7, Josephus writes, “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).” Josephus is likely referencing Daniel 8:14, “He said to me, ‘It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.’”

# Quick Takes



## Did you know?

The earliest reference to the Hanukkah miracle of the menorah oil lasting for eight days is found in Babylonian Talmud Bavli Shabbat 21b, which says, "What is [the reason of] Chanukah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Chanukah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean 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, 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 and thanksgiving" (Soncino translation)



## Wisdom for Today

"In lighting the Chanukah lamp, the Jew announces to the outside world: This is my flame.... I am prepared to share my light with you and to be an active member within a shared universe of experience.... We choose not to hide the flame of our spiritual tradition within the secluded confines of our people, but rather we wish to have our flame radiate light in the marketplaces of history."

- David Hartman in *Rabbinic Responses to History as Mirrored in Hanukkah and Purim*, 31

“”

*"The question that perplexes historians is: How did the Jews survive to enjoy the success they have? . . . We feebly struggle to explain Jewish survival in secular terms: Maybe it is because they were poor? Maybe it is because they were rich? Maybe it is because they were pacifists? Maybe it is because they fought back? Maybe it is because they were concentrated? Maybe it is because they were scattered? But we know that other peoples shared these characteristics and are gone. The question stands: Why did only the Jews survive? The theological solution is attractive."*

- Lawrence Kelemen in *Permission to Believe*, 70, 84

## The Netiv Quiz

### How closely did you read?

1. What is the biblical title of the figure who appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses?  
A. Metatron  
B. The One  
C. The Angel of the Lord  
D. God's Servant
2. There are Jewish scholars who argue God taking the form of a man fits within Jewish tradition  
A. True  
B. False
3. In which New Testament book do we find Yeshua celebrating Hanukkah?  
A. Matthew  
B. Acts  
C. Luke  
D. John
4. Which prophecy does Matthew want the reader to think of when he describes Yeshua riding into Jerusalem on a donkey?  
A. Daniel 7:13-14  
B. Zechariah 9:9-10  
C. Isaiah 9:6[5]  
D. Isaiah 53
5. What is the name of the historical document where we first read the story of Hanukkah?  
A. Babylonian Talmud  
B. 1 Maccabees  
C. Gospel of John  
D. Daniel
6. There is not an ancient tradition within Judaism that the death of the righteous atones for sin  
A. True  
B. False
7. What did Paul the Apostle instruct Jewish people to do?  
A. Remain circumcised  
B. Hang a wreath on the door  
C. Eat pork  
D. Sing Christmas carols
8. What is the name of the 1910 newsletter written by Jewish followers of Yeshua?  
A. The Jewish Christian Chronicle  
B. The Messianic Jew  
C. The Messianic Minute  
D. The Hebrew Christian



## What if Jesus is the Jewish Messiah?

You might be ready for the next step – to acknowledge Yeshua (Jesus) as Israel's long-awaited Messiah. Here are some simple steps to take as you continue your journey.

**REPENT** — God is holy and we are not! We frequently behave in ways that separate us from Him, and we need His forgiveness. The Hebrew Scriptures say, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:1–2). Recognizing our sin is the first major step toward an intimate and personal relationship with the Lord.

**BELIEVE** — We cannot earn God’s forgiveness through good works or keeping the mitzvot. The Torah says about Abraham, “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). The New Covenant Scriptures say, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23). Personal salvation is a gift from God that we accept by faith.

**ACCEPT YESHUA** — The great Rabbi Saul, writing in the New Covenant Scriptures, tells us what we should believe to receive the gift of personal salvation: “That Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). If Yeshua is both divine and the rightful king of Israel, then He deserves our full allegiance.

**PRAY** — Prayer is a personal conversation with God—heart to heart. You can pray in this way: “God, you are righteous and I am not. I have disobeyed your commandments. I believe Yeshua is my Messiah. His death and resurrection are my only hope. Please forgive me and give me a new life with you.” And God will answer, as we read in the New Covenant Scriptures, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

**LIVE HOLY** — Once you find forgiveness through the gift of salvation through placing your trust in Messiah Yeshua, He calls us to live holy lives according to His word (Ephesians 2:8–10; 1 Peter 1:15–16). We are to put G-d first in all that we do, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28–31), we are to flee sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18), we are to be honest in our words and in our business dealings (Ephesians 4:25), we are to avoid unwholesome talk (Ephesians 4:29), we are to control our anger (James 1:19), and we are not succumb to envy and pride, but to be humble (1 Peter 5:5). While forgiveness is immediate, shedding our lives from sin takes a lifetime of submitting to Messiah and relying on His grace and mercy as we grow in our holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1). The New Testament even calls Jewish followers of Messiah to remain Jewish (1 Corinthians 7:17–18; Acts 21:17–26), only to transform our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that do not conform to the truth of the gospel and Messiah Yeshua (Romans 8:29).

נתיב האמת

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**The Path of Truth**

Do you have questions, complaints, or concerns?

Please do not hesitate to contact us:

Email: [info@chosenpeople.com](mailto:info@chosenpeople.com)

Phone: (212) 223-2252

Chat with us at:  
[www.aboutmessiah.com](http://www.aboutmessiah.com)



**CHOSEN PEOPLE**  
MINISTRIES

241 East 51st Street  
New York, NY 10022