

The Jewish people are known for their many festivals or celebrations. Whenever they would experience God's deliverance in a mighty way they would have an annual celebration to commemorate the event. For example, Purim celebrates Israel's deliverance from the evil Haman (who wished to annihilate them) during the time of Queen Esther. Passover is another annual celebration of the Jews that commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt. In this paper my focus will be on the festival of Hanukkah. This will include how Hanukkah, started and if it is observed in Christianity.

During the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, he brutally began the process of Hellenization against the Jewish people. They were forbidden to worship God, practice circumcision, offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbath. Furthermore, they were forced to participate in idolatry and commanded to eat foods that were not kosher. This upset a lot of the Jews and cause some of them to retaliate. One was the priest Mattathias who refused to perform a sacrifice on a pagan altar and because of that along with other problems the Maccabean conflict began. They gained control of Jerusalem and rebuilt the altar. It is because of this victory and God's faithfulness that Hanukkah is celebrated.

I do not know of any Christian's who personally observe Hanukkah, but I do believe that it would be ok if they did. John shares in chapter 10 that Jesus entered the temple during the feast of dedication. If this feast was insignificant I do not believe that Jesus would have been present. We must be mindful that these events took place during the intertestamental period. If the Jews did not recapture Jerusalem the people of Israel may have been destroyed. If that would not have happened we would be without Mary and the birth of Jesus. As I conclude I believe that it is important for Christians to have knowledge of Hanukkah for it shows the faithfulness of God.