



# Celebrate Hanukkah!





## The *Hanukkah* ~ Christmas Connection



*Hanukkah* originated over 150 years **before** *Yeshua* (Jesus) was born. God's people, the Jewish people had fallen to hard times, a clear warning that their relationship with God was on the outs (see Dt. 28). Israel's enemies to the north attacked and took control of the Jewish state. The invaders made it illegal to worship the one true and living God. If any Jew was found studying or even obeying the laws of the Bible, he would be executed. Many Jews were even forced to worship idols. When the evil soldiers came to the town of the *Hashmonean* clan, now known as the *Maccabees*, to force this idolatry, the town's patriarch named *Mattathias* refused to offer sacrifice to the false god. A volunteer from the crowd, however, worked his way forward to offer sacrifice. In Holy indignation, *Mattathias* slew him.<sup>1</sup> *Mattathias* and his sons then killed the soldiers and fled to the mountains. From there they gathered together a brave company of men who decided it was time to reclaim their heritage and land.

The *Maccabees* realized that the sins of the nation of Israel had resulted in their conquest, so they earnestly sought God in repentant prayer. They sought the Lord, and the Lord was found of them. Though they were terribly outnumbered, they chose to fight against their conquerors. Backed by their faith in the Covenant God of Israel Who had promised through Moses that "*five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.*"<sup>2</sup> They fought and they won just as God said they would.

The small Judean army was victorious in battle after battle.<sup>3</sup> They even retook the beautiful Holy Temple. After evicting the pagans, they re-lit the *menorah* (candelabra) that stood in the Holy place, but to their horror most of the sacred oil had been destroyed. There was only enough to last for one day, and a new supply would take a week to prepare. In faith, the candles were lit, and preparations for more oil were made. Legend has it

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<sup>1</sup> See a similar incident, Numbers 25:7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 26:8

<sup>3</sup> Read the Apocryphal books of *Maccabees* for the details.

that the Menorah stayed lit for the rest of the week,<sup>4</sup> until more oil was available. Generation after generation of Jewish people, to this very day, light miniature *menorahs* on *Hanukkah* to celebrate and remember God's gift of deliverance.

It should be noted that the Temple was the most sacred place in the Jewish world. It was at the Temple where God promised to meet with the people and forgive them of their sins. Each and every day Jewish people would sacrifice sin offerings and countless other offerings at the Temple. In this sense *Hanukkah* honors two types of salvation: deliverance from oppressors and the deliverance from sin pictured in the Temple service. The Temple was taken by the Syrians but rededicated one year later on the exact same date. That date was December 25<sup>th</sup>.

About 150 years later the Jewish people were again under foreign domination, but this time to Rome. Israel had again fallen into a spiritual malaise. They cried out for God to send them the promised deliverer, the Messiah.

Many of the Judeans (some of the ancestors of the *Maccabees*), believed that a humble carpenter named *Yeshua* might very well be the Messiah. They tried to make Him King at one time but He refused.<sup>5</sup> It wasn't until after His crucifixion and resurrection that His followers realized that He did provide deliverance. He didn't provide the Maccabean style deliverance from Rome they had hoped for, but deliverance from an even more evil and powerful enemy, sin. In addition, *Yeshua* promised to return one day to deliver His people from their mortal enemies as well.<sup>6</sup> We still await that promised return. In the meantime we are so thrilled that the Messiah came, we celebrate His birth -- which, as tradition holds, occurred on December 25<sup>th</sup>!

In short, it can be said that during both *Hanukkah* and Christmas, we light lights and give gifts to remember and celebrate God's gift of salvation.

Here is the *Hanukkah*/Christmas connection. Both holidays credit God with providing salvation, and both holidays celebrate this salvation. *Hanukkah* celebrates God's salvation prior to Messiah's advent.

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<sup>4</sup> A total of 8 days and nights

<sup>5</sup> John 6:15

<sup>6</sup> Rev. 19:11 ff

*Hanukkah* isn't only about physical salvation from mortal enemies. The main *Hanukkah* event is the rededication of the Temple.<sup>7</sup> The Temple is where God's plan of salvation was revealed and practiced before Messiah's coming. With Christmas we are introduced to *Yeshua* who fulfills what the sacrifices pictured. Therefore both holidays are legitimate for God-fearing people to honor. *Hanukkah* honors God for keeping His covenant promise to protect Israel. Had God not protected Israel, He wouldn't have been able to send us Israel's most cherished Son, *Yeshua*. Christmas celebrates the fulfillment of that promise and the coming of the Messiah.

This holiday season, we'd like to help those of you who don't yet believe in the Messiah to personally appropriate God's gift of salvation. Please contact us and we'll be happy to tell you more.

This year, may *Hanukkah* and Christmas mean more to you than toys and pretty lights. May it recall God's gracious love and His gift to us.

***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”***


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<sup>7</sup> *Hanukkah* means dedication and is mentioned one time in Scripture: John 10:22.

## Observing *Hanukkah* in the Home

1. **Friends:** *Hanukkah* is a family holiday and is all the more enjoyable when friends are invited over to eat potato latkes, play *dreidel*, watch *Ben Hur* or *Fiddler on the Roof* and enjoy the evening! But don't take it for granted that everyone knows the significance of the holiday, so tell the story!

2.  : Decorations can include: *Dreidels*, *Hanukkah gelt* (gold coins made of chocolate) placed strategically about the home, banner (homemade or purchased), Israeli flags, *menorahs*, and other Judaica or Israeli memorabilia. Be creative and come up with your own ideas. Have your children make Jewish stars, etc.

3. **Music:** There are many excellent tapes of *Hanukkah* music. You can also play traditional Jewish melodies either Yiddish or Hebrew. Klezmer music is best!

4. **Foods:** During *Hanukkah*, it is a tradition to eat foods cooked in oil as a reminder of the miracle of the oil. Any food fried in oil is acceptable, but Potato Latkes (pancakes) are a must! You'll find a favorite recipe on page 7.



4. **Menorah:** The *Hanukkah Menorah* (or more properly, *Hanukiah*) is an eight-branched candlestick. A purchased decorative *Menorah* is preferred; however, each family member may be encouraged to make his or her own using their creative ideas. See page 6 for Lighting the Menorah and blessings.



5. *Dreidel*<sup>8</sup>: The *Dreidel* game is played by spinning a top called a *dreidel*. The four Hebrew letters נגהש stand for: "A great miracle happened there." See game instructions and rules on page 7.



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<sup>8</sup> A top used to play a "put and take" game, usually with golden chocolate coins.



## Lighting of the Menorah (Blessing over the Candles)

*One of the candles on the Menorah is special. It's called the *Shammash* or servant candle. It's elevated and used to light the others candles.*

It's customary to recite the first two prayers on the first night only, and then to recite the blessing over the candle(s) each night as they are lit.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שהחנינו וקיימנו והגיינו לזמן הזה.	Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu melech ha-olam, Sheh-he-che-yanu vi-kee- yimanu Vi-hee-gee-yanu laz-man ha- zeh.
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Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שששה נסים לאבותינו במים ההם בזמן הזה.	Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu melech ha-olam, Shi-asa nee-seem la-avo-teinu, Baya-meem ha-haim baz-man ha-zeh.
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Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who made miracles for our forefathers, in those days at this season.

**Blessing over the candles** (remember to use the *Shammash*, usually the middle, elevated candle, to light the candles.)

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.	Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu melech ha-olam, Asher kid-shanu bi-mitzvo- tav, Vi-tzee-vanu li-had-leek ner shel Olam*.
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Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us to kindle the lights of the world.

On night two, use the *Shammash* to light two candles (left to right) and recite this blessing over the candles. Each night light one more candle and recite this blessing over the candles as they are lit.

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\*This is the traditional *Hanukkah* prayer with one exception. The last word in the third blessing above is "*Olam*," but traditionally the word is "*Hanukkah*." God did command His children to be lights to the world, but He did not command us to light the *Hanukkah* candles.



## Potato *Latkes* (pancakes)

If you own a food processor, this recipe is a cinch.

Makes about 15 pancakes

2 cups grated, raw potatoes, compactly packed

1 egg

¼ cup flour

1 ¼ teaspoons salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

Vegetable oil for frying

Small onion, finely chopped

⅛ teaspoon pepper

1. Peel and grate potatoes.
2. Sprinkle and mix with baking soda. Let stand for a few minutes.
3. Squeeze liquid out of potatoes.
4. Mix all ingredients together.
5. Drop spoonfuls into the hot frying pan and flatten the *latkes* into oval shapes. When golden brown, turn pancakes over.
6. When ready, turn out pancakes onto paper towel. Serve immediately.

***Great plain or with applesauce and sour cream.***

## The *Dreidel* Game

Usually you use candy or nuts to play this game. In case you don't have those items to play with, we've added points here for you to use. The letters on the *dreidel* are the first letters in the Hebrew sentence: "A great miracle happened there."



How to play:

- ◆ Everyone puts a piece of gelt (candy or nuts) into the "pot."
- ◆ A player spins the *dreidel*; if it lands on ך, he gets nothing or zero points and passes his turn.
- ◆ If it lands on ך, he gets the entire pot or 20 points!
- ◆ If it lands on ך, he gets half of the pot or 5 points.
- ◆ And if it lands on ן, he must put two in the pot or take away 2 points!
- ◆ After each spin that player puts a piece of gelt into the pot and passes the *dreidel* to the next person to take their turn.



## *Hanukkah* Word Search

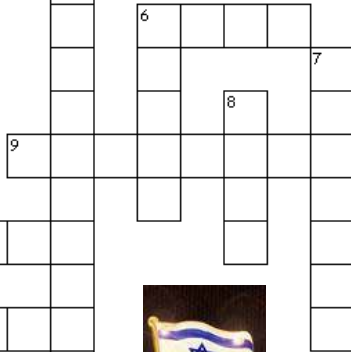
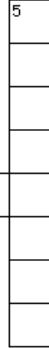
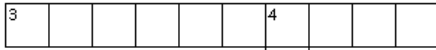
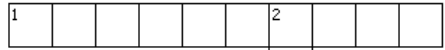
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H A R O N E M S N S A S R D Y T I  
Y E S H U A Z L A E H S B A B S L  
P A N B W U B H F L P L I O N I U  
S T H G I L T H G I L E G V W C I  
L D P L M Y I C E L E B R A T E E

**CELEBRATE**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**COVENANT GOD**  
**DELIVERER**  
**EIGHT DAYS**  
**GIFT OF DELIVERANCE**  
**GIFTS**  
**GIVE GIFTS**  
**HANUKAH** (*alt. spelling*)  
**HASHMONEAN**  
**LIGHT LIGHTS**  
**LIGHTS**

**MACCABEES**  
**MATTATHIAS**  
**MENORAH**  
**MESSIAH**  
**OIL**  
**REPENTANCE**  
**SALVATION**  
**SAVIOR**  
**SIN OFFERINGS**  
**SYRIANS**  
**TEMPLE**  
**YESHUA**



# HANUKKAH FUN



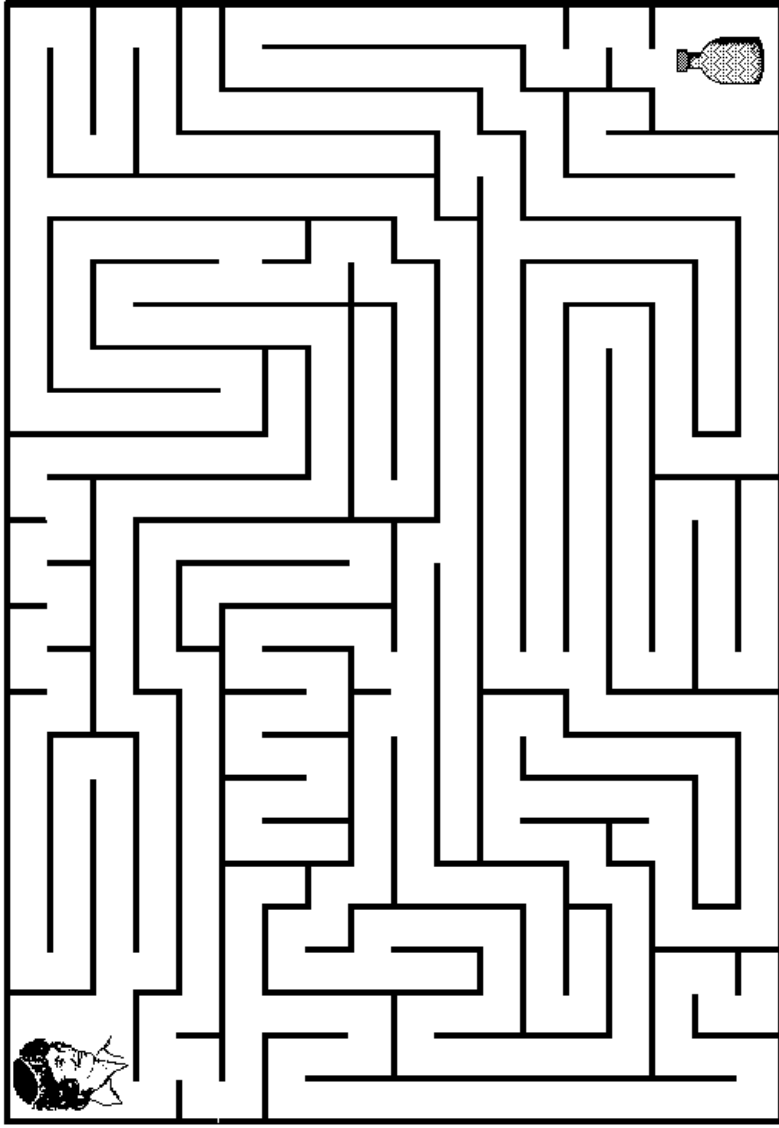
## Across

1. Reason God gave the Judeans victory
3. Name of priest who began the revolt
6. Only book of Bible that mentions *Hanukkah*
9. Best food to eat during *Hanukkah*
10. Number of candles on *Hanukiah*
11. Reason Judeans became overwhelmed by Syrians

## Down

2. Syrian ruler who defiled the Temple
4. Proper name of the *Maccabees*
5. Name of menorah used during *Hanukkah*
6. Heroic leader of the *Maccabees*
7. Name of the servant candle
8. Number of Hebrew letters on a *dreidel*

# FIND THE FLASK OF OIL MAZE



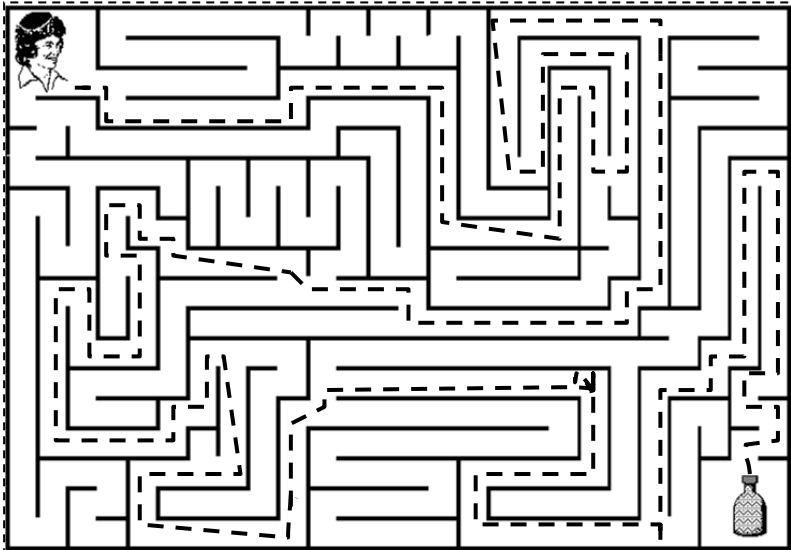
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Find the flask of oil

# Puzzle Solutions

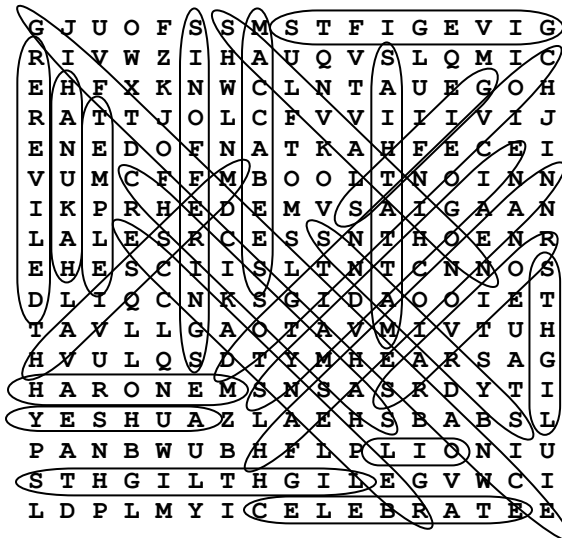
## Hanukkah Fun Crossword Answers

Across		Down	
1. Repentance	9. Potato <i>Latkes</i>	2. <i>Antiochus</i>	6. Judah
3. <i>Mattathias</i>	10. Nine	4. <i>Hashmoneans</i>	7. <i>Shammás</i>
6. John	11. Sins	5. <i>Hanukiah</i>	8. Four



Find the flask of oil

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**We believe that  
the God of *Hanukkah*  
and  
the God of Christmas  
are one and the same.**

As recorded in the Jewish scriptures (now known as the Old Testament), the God of Israel prophesied that:

1. The Savior would be born in Israel in a small town called Bethlehem. [Micah 5:1(2)]
2. He would be both human and divine. (Isaiah 9:6)
3. This Savior, known as the Messiah, would be rejected by many people, even His own Jewish people. (Psalm 2:1-2; Psalm 118:22)
4. He would die to make atonement for the sins of the world. (Isaiah 53)
5. He would rise from the dead. (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:9-10)
6. Gentiles would flock to this Jewish Savior. (Isaiah 11:10)

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Melody for Maoz Tzur notated by B.Marcello in 1724

Ma - oz tzur y' - shu - a - ti l' - cha na - e l' - sha - bey - ach.  
 Ti - kon beyt t' - fi - la - ti v' - sham to - da n' - za - bey - ach. L'

eyt ta - chin mat - bey - ach mi - tzar ha - m' - na - bey - ach,

Az eg - mor b' - shir miz - mor cha - nu - kat ha - miz - bey - ach.

Rock of Ages, let our song  
 Praise Thy saving power;  
 Thou, amidst the raging foes,  
 Wast our sheltering tower.  
 Furious they assailed us,  
 But Thine arm availed us,  
 And Thy Word  
 Broke their sword  
 When our own strength failed us.

Kindling new the holy lamps,  
 Priests, approved in suffering,  
 Purified the nation's shrine,  
 Brought to God their offering.  
 And His courts surrounding  
 Hear, in joy abounding,  
 Happy throngs,  
 Singing songs  
 With a mighty sounding.

Children of the martyr race,  
 Whether free or fettered,  
 Wake the echoes of the songs  
 Where ye may be scattered.  
 Yours the message cheering  
 That the time is nearing  
 Which will see  
 All men free,  
 Tyrants disappearing.