

Connecting the Dots – The Maccabees

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 8:12

Seleucid (Syrian) Period – [approximately 198-143 bc]

The geographic location of Israel put it between the Seleucid Empire to its **north** and the Egyptian Empire to its **south**.

The Jews were the only people to resist **Hellenism**, being led by Onias III (198-174 bc), the legitimate High Priest, a Zadokian descendant.

To be blessed by God, Israel required the high priestly succession to go from father to **first-born** son.

The replacement of the first-born Onias III with a younger brother was the first time that the line of succession was **not followed** and was a national **disobedience** to God's law.

Antiochus believed that people needed visual gods and that they could be ruled and controlled through a manifestation of his Greek god, Zeus; he declared himself to be the **incarnation** of Zeus, named Antiochus Epiphanies, meaning "manifestation," "shining forth," or "**appearing**" (cf. Titus 2:13).

On the **25th day of Kislev**, 167 BC, Antiochus Epiphanies, a Gentile seeking revenge, defiled the Temple in Jerusalem by sacrificing a pig on the altar, declaring himself a god, and requiring the Jews' worship - prefiguring the **abomination** of desolation of the Antichrist.

Under severe religious persecution, Mattathias Hasmon, a devout priest, with his sons, led an ongoing revolt to free Jerusalem and the Temple from Antiochus' control.

At Mattathias death, his son known as Yehuda HaMakabi ("Judah the **Hammer**") assumed the leadership of the rebel army and successfully liberated the Temple on the **25th day of Kislev**, 164 bc.

Biblical guidelines required oil that had been prepared and sealed by a true High Priest.

All they could find was **one cruse** of oil, just enough for one day's Temple lighting.

Miraculously, it continued to burn for the **eight days** of the dedication.

This event has been celebrated ever since by Jews as the festival of Hanukkah, with Hanukkah meaning "**dedication**."