

72nd - Bible Seeds Podcast

(Published 12-18-2022)

- Intro Music – The back ground version of the song “*INVITATION – THE HANUKKAH – CHRISTMAS SONG*”

Intro narrative by Carl Vasta

Hi, my name is Carl Vasta and I would like to welcome you to the Bible Seeds section here, at Understanding God’s Word. This is where I get to comment on biblical readings and stories that brings the bible into what’s happening to us in our daily lives.

I’ll touch on such topics as Family Prayer or Why I Believe There Is A God. I’ll talk about what was predicted that makes these the ‘Terrible Times In The Last Days’ or how to ‘Have A Daily Meaningful Relationship With God.’

Today's topic is **The Jewish and Christian Celebrations**

The celebration of Hanukkah and Christmas is coming up this month.

Hanukkah starts on *December 18th and ends the 26th*.

Christmas starts four weeks before the *25th of December*. It is referred to as ***The Christmas Advent*** and is recognized by many Christians as the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus on the ***25th of December, which is Christmas day.***

I will play for you three verses of a song I wrote titled *Invitation – The Hanukkah – Christmas Song* which is on my **"It's Christmas CD"** and can be **downloaded free** on my website *carlvasta.com*.

Right now, I'm going to play the first verse of the "Hanukkah – Christmas Song"

*Hanukkah candles on a Menorah, day by day we light,
We now have seen the glow of seven, eight we light tonight
Presents we have given to each other from our love
God gives His light from this Menorah to the ones He loves
God chose us to be His people and so it will be . . .*

The **Hanukkah** celebration came from the actions that were taken by the son of the powerful Syrian king, Antiochus III who took Jerusalem in 198 B.C., and was welcomed by the Jews because he gave treasures to the Temple.

Twenty nine years later, his son, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), ruled Jerusalem in a cruel manner, desecrating the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar, and prohibiting Jewish sacrifices, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and killing any Jew possessing a copy of the Holy Scriptures.

These outrages lead to war with the Jews in which the Syrian armies were repeatedly defeated by the brilliant Judas Maccabees.

Jerusalem was delivered from this cruel king by Maccabees in the month of Chislev (our month of December in 165 B.C.) This time of

deliverance has been celebrated by the Jews as **Hanukkah, or the Feast of Lights.**

It is told that after the forces of Antiochus had been driven from the Temple, the sons of Israel went up to the Temple and rebuilt its gates and purified the Temple from the dead bodies and from the defilement.

And when they were ready to re-dedicate the temple, they sought after pure olive oil to light the lamps, but the Maccabees discovered that almost all of the ritual olive oil had been profaned.

They found only a single container that was still sealed by the High Priest, with only enough oil to keep the menorah in the Temple lit for a single day. The miracle was that when they used this, it burned for eight days. This was the time it took to have new oil pressed and made ready.

Now the Jews celebrate by lighting the nine candles of the Menorah, one called a “shamish” which in Hebrew means the “attendant”. It stays lit constantly and is used to light the others until all eight candles are burning.

Even though Hanukkah celebrations now include gifts, the readings and blessings used at Hanukkah are the same readings Jesus did in celebrating this feast.

Right now, I'm going to play the 2nd verse of the "Hanukkah – Christmas Song"

Cold winds are blowing, soon it is snowing on this Christmas Eve

Silver bells ringing, carolers singing on this Christmas Eve

Gather round the Christmas tree to celebrate His birth

He took our sins upon a cross and gave our souls their worth

Jesus called us out of darkness, now our souls are free

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, **"the Christ child."** Born of Mary, and placed in her by God's Holy Spirit. And the angel Gabriel said, **"For this reason the holy child will be called the "Son Of God"**.

Joseph was the husband of Mary, in name only, until after Jesus was born.

All this had happened to fulfill what the LORD had said through the prophet **Isaiah** concerning the birth of the **Messiah: "A virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son, and they shall call him Immanuel"**, which is found in **Isaiah 7:14**, a name which means **"God is with us"**.

And though this happened more than 2000 years ago, the whole world still celebrates Christmas in one form or another.

Some people celebrate with an evergreen tree that represents everlasting life because it does not die, even during the harshest winter and represents the life we have in Christ. **(John 3:16)**

Some people say the triangular shape of the tree has been used to represent the **Holy Trinity - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit**.

The direction of the branches point upward, reflecting our praise to God!

The candles or lights on the tree signify how Jesus called us out of darkness because he is the light unto the world.

The star placed atop the tree represents the star the wise men followed to Bethlehem.

The gifts the wise men brought to Jesus represent the gifts under the tree that are given in love to each other and a reminder that God gave us the greatest gift. **Our salvation, through his son Jesus!**

And finally, we must remember that our savior Jesus was a Jew. Every Christian was born from the Jewish religion and we hold true the many things that were revealed to us by GOD in the Old Testament.

So celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas in a way that brings you closer to GOD, your Creator.

And now, I'm going to play for you the third and last verse of the "Hanukkah – Christmas Song". It shows that both those of the Jewish faith and the Christian faith are waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

The first time for the Jews and the RETURN of the Messiah for the Christians. And the last line brings this song home . . .

We have been waiting for the Messiah promised long ago

Tonight if He comes then we are ready to follow where He goes

Some give up and shake their heads, They say that "He won't come!"

"He doesn't need an invitation, we'll know He's THE ONE!"

(Play the third verse of the Hanukkah – Christmas Song)