



Truth Nuggets

How a Hanukkah Menorah Saved America

It was New Year's Eve, 1777 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. George Washington and his makeshift, poorly-armed, cold & hungry tiny band of rebels gathered there to regroup after a series of defeats by the British. The enemy had even taken control over New York City & then Philadelphia. This fight for independence from Great Britain seemed impossible, being so vastly outnumbered by the professional, well-supplied British forces, which also included 30,000 German mercenaries, the entire Iroquois Indian Nation, and even many Colonists, (Tories).

Overwhelmed & discouraged that night, there seemed to be no choice but to surrender. Pondering this, Washington walked through the camp to check on the morale of the soldiers. One tent stood out. There was a special glow to it. As Washington approached, he peeked inside to see a young Jewish soldier kneeling before his Hanukkah Menorah, lighting the 8th candle, on that final night of Hanukkah. He asked the young man about the 8-lights candle-stand, so the fellow told the story of Hanukkah.

The Greek Empire (in about 167 BC), had decimated the land of Israel, defiled the Temple, and began to force the pagan Greek culture upon the Jews. Those who would not comply were severely persecuted or killed (often by unimaginably cruel torture), for three things in particular; for keeping the Sabbath, circumcision, and eating only food that God called "clean." Furthermore, the Greeks were especially infuriated when the name of the Jewish God, "Yehovah," was spoken. These four Torah deeds are written as outward signs of being in covenant with Yehovah. The Greeks worshiped "Zeus," one of several names for the sun-god, an act described as an abomination in the Torah, (Ezekiel 8:12-18).

But one man, Matthias Maccabees, a priest, could take no more. He loudly proclaimed his stand, while killing a Jewish defector & the man requiring they sacrifice to Zeus. Mattathias was joined by his sons & a small brave remnant. The conflict had begun. They would rather die than give up their freedom of worship. They earnestly prayed as six battles ensued, each much larger than the former, yet the Maccabees claimed victory in all of these! The Jews had regained their land & the Temple, replaced the defiled altar with a new one, and sanctified it in 7-days. The eighth day began as a new beginning, the day when the offerings would then be accepted by Yehovah for the people, (1Maccabees 2:52-56 based on Ezekiel 43:26-27).

The youth spoke further to the General, “And I believe that God will do the same for you & us. Hanukkah is the remembrance of victory to the few over the many, the weak over the mighty, and the good over the evil. And I believe that we will triumph through your leadership against our enemies as well!”

George Washington knew this was a message to him from God. Emboldened, he went forth, winning battle after battle, freeing Philadelphia, then New York City, and finally forcing the British to surrender. Against insurmountable odds, he had won the Revolutionary War. The people had their independence from their oppressor! No longer “Colonies,” they were now “United States.”

As a final note, “Hanukkah” is Hebrew for “Dedication.” Yahshua (Jesus), attended this annual “Feast of Dedication” at the Temple in Jerusalem, (John 10:22). Hanukkah is always celebrated on the 25th day of the 9th month on the Hebrew calendar, (December on the familiar Gregorian calendar). This was the date that the dedication of the altar began, on the exact day of the year when it had been defiled. Today, we remember the event by lighting an additional candle each day as we rejoice for the time of increased light & truth...and the righteous reigning over the wicked.

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