

A Study of the Origins of the Jewish Holiday Called Hanukkah

By Lori Johnson

For those of us who find ourselves within the community of the Hebrew Roots movement, we hopefully have learned some principles that help us to understand the scriptures in a way that previously escaped us. One of these principles is the agreement that Torah is the foundation for understanding the rest of the scriptures. We are to interpret “the end from the beginning” (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 46:10), meaning that we should not read anything in the Brit Chadashah/New Testament which does not in principle agree with the Torah. Reading and understanding the scriptures from this perspective enables us to walk in the Way with Yeshua. Stepping outside of that way can lead us to trouble. On this point I hope the reader can agree.¹

With that in mind, I wish to explore the subject of Hanukkah, which some may associate with the historical events around the oppression of Antiochus upon the Jews during the time of the Maccabees. However, I do believe that the underlying story is much older, and actually starts in Eden. What happened there? Our parents, Adam and Chavah/Eve, decided to lean on their own understanding of what was good and what was evil instead of trusting what Yahuweh told them. As a consequence, throughout scripture, we see Israel struggle to trust Yahuweh/God and obey Him and be a “set-apart” people who do not involve themselves in false worship.

He makes it very clear to us. He is in the set-apart realm, and He wants us to walk there with Him, but we must move away from the things He deems inappropriate. It’s a very “black and white” world with our Creator, which doesn’t sit well in this age of moral relativism. Proverbs 3 tells us not to lean on our own understanding, but it seems the habit is old and ingrained, even to this day. Our carnal nature is the consequence of our parents having ingested the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Leaning on our own understanding, instead of obeying the plain precepts of scripture, leads to confusion and rationalization and self-justification – all of which drive us from Yahuweh and, worse, cause the next generation to stray and stumble.

When Moshe/Moses died and Yehoshua/Joshua took Israel into the Promised Land, Israel failed to obey Yahuweh’s instruction to root out all of the peoples who lived in the land that He was giving them. Those people were idol worshippers, and He had chosen our ancestors to worship Him, and only Him. Because they failed to rid the land of people who would cause them to stray from Him, we have never had pure worship on planet Earth. We have always had mixture, and as much as we desire to worship purely, in spirit and in truth, we have a very hard time doing it. Think very deeply about the truth of this. The earth is polluted with a mixture of Yahuweh’s commands and a “coloring” of them with our own habits and practices. This is the substance of human traditions. Often these traditions center on idolatry and the subsequent worship of false gods, even though we may not know it – or want to admit it.

Many of us who have come out of the church system understand the pagan origins of Christmas, Easter, and Sunday worship. If we can see the paganism in some Christian traditions, we must also consider this possibility in the Jewish traditions we follow. Humans have a strong desire to celebrate, and we sometimes neglect the need to confirm in scripture that what and how we celebrate is pleasing to our Father. If we do not, we can fall prey to our adversary, who knows how to tempt us through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. We are constantly attracted to that which is “new.” It happened with our ancestors, and so it continues today as a result of ingesting the fruit we were told not to eat. Are we aware of just how easily the “new thing” can tempt us? Are we truly on guard against it?

I have heard Hebrew Roots believers say they celebrate Hanukkah because Yeshua did. That they are very much looking forward to the parties and the jelly doughnuts and the lighting of the hanukiah. Some believe that gift giving and sending Hanukkah cards and playing with the dreidel and handing out gelt and being in awe of the “miracle of the oil” are good things, that they put us in “solidarity” with our brother Judah. There are many,

¹ Another minor point for clarification – I have used both Hebrew and Greek names in many places in this text, as an aid to the reader. While I realize this may be a distraction to some, there are still many who are not familiar enough with the Hebrew names to be able to otherwise follow the text.

many ministries that teach this. But solidarity is not to be sought at the cost of purity. Our highest priority should be discovering our Father's will and honoring Him by walking in it.

It has not been unusual to see Hebrew Roots believers misunderstand how to obey Torah. Who knows how to do it very well? We are all learning. But there is much *unlearning* that has to be done when we come out of false systems. Perhaps for some it is a much longer and more difficult process than what was assumed at first glance. But the answer is not to pick up the tenets of another false system, even though it looks better to us than what we had. Different isn't always better, or right. Yahuweh has created us to worship and celebrate – only we must do it according to His protocol, not our own. The appointed times were created for meeting with Him and for celebrating our lives together, and for more deeply understanding the work and person of Yeshua. If only as much attention were lavished on the moedim as there is on the manmade holidays! That would be a true blessing to our Father.

In order to more clearly understand the subject of Hanukkah, this paper explores the grammar, the history, and some of the traditions of this holiday. I will also examine the scripture in John 10 which is taken to mean that Yeshua celebrated Hanukkah. It is not meant to be an exhaustive study, but rather to present an informed perspective. I have purposely avoided studying any of the alleged prophetic significance of Hanukkah and will explore that subject separately at another time. My goal in this paper is to separate out what is human tradition from what may be a permissible spiritual tradition.

This information may be useful to you in your studies, and I welcome your input if you provide it in a way that honors our Creator and that adheres to rules of good scholarship – clearly presented rational discourse with no eisegesis and no proof texting.²

The grammatical meaning of Hanukkah

This is the entry for Hanukkah from the Complete Word Study Dictionary³:

H2598, חֲנֻכָּה, *h^anukkāh*: A feminine noun meaning dedication, ceremony. It was used to show that something was officially in service. The word describes the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem after it was rebuilt under Nehemiah (Nehemiah 12:27). It also refers to the dedication of David's house (Psalms 30:1; cf. Deuteronomy 20:5). The word refers to an altar dedication in 2Ch 7:9 and also in Numbers 7 where it appears to refer particularly to the offerings offered on the altar (Numbers 7:10-11, 84, and 88). The word is best known in reference to the altar rededication described in the apocryphal books of Maccabees, which has since been celebrated as the Jewish festival, Hanukkah.

This is the entry from the King James Concordance:

H2598, חֲנֻכָּה, *chănûkkâh*

Total KJV Occurrences: 8

dedication, 6: Num 7:84, Num 7:88, 2Ch 7:9, Neh 12:27 (2), Psa 30:1

dedicating, 2: Num 7:10-11 (2)

So we can see in scripture that the word "hanukkah" refers to the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the house of David, an altar, and offerings upon an altar. It *never* refers to dedicating oneself to Yahuweh or His Son, Yeshua. Yet this is what many Hebrew Roots believers say they are doing when they "celebrate" Hanukkah. To celebrate Hanukkah by "dedicating" oneself to Yahuweh or Yeshua is a manmade tradition – one observed too

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³ From e-sword resource [The Complete WordStudy Dictionary](#), Spiros Zodhiates, AMG Publishers, ISBN-13: 978-0899576671 (Old Testament) and ISBN-13: 978-0899576633 (New Testament), 1992. Unless otherwise noted, all reference tools mentioned are part of the free e-sword software package available at www.e-sword.net.

close for comfort to prohibited pagan days in this writer's opinion. Also, consider that Yahuweh has already provided the moedim that we may dedicate ourselves afresh and honor the many things He has done, is doing, and will do on behalf of His called-out ones. Hanukkah refers to the rededication of a physical temple during a time in Israel's history. We should ask why followers of Yeshua are celebrating the rededication of a temple that is no longer standing. We ought rather to focus on the temple of our own bodies, where we meet Him, as Rav Shaul teaches us:

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, *and that is what you are.* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, NASB, italics mine)

Celebrating the rededication of an ancient physical temple is a human tradition, one that has a history which it seems is not well studied by those in the Hebrew Roots community. While many will plainly state that they do not see this holiday as such, it is often presented as the Jewish equivalent to Christmas, even by professing Jews. But no matter what we call it, what Yahuweh calls it is what's important. Let's look at some further elements to decide if and how we should celebrate this holiday.

The historical source of the Feast of Dedication

If we take as historical evidence the word "hanukkah" as used in the apocryphal Maccabees books, then let us first consider their source. According to Easton's Illustrated Dictionary:

"There were originally five books of the Maccabees. The first contains a history of the war of independence, commencing (175 B.C.) in a series of patriotic struggles against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, and terminating 135 B.C. It became part of the Vulgate Version of the Bible, and was thus retained among the Apocrypha. The second gives a history of the Maccabees' struggle from 176 to 161 B.C. Its object is to encourage and admonish the Jews to be faithful to the religion of their fathers. The third does not hold a place in the Apocrypha, but is read in the Greek Church. Its design is to comfort the Alexandrian Jews in their persecution. Its writer was evidently an Alexandrian Jew. The fourth was found in the Library of Lyons, but was afterwards burned. The fifth contains a history of the Jews from 184 to 86 B.C. It is a compilation made by a Jew after the destruction of Jerusalem, from ancient memoirs, to which he had access. It need scarcely be added that none of these books has any divine authority."

It has been suggested that 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees present viewpoints of the Sadducees and Pharisees, respectively, though it is generally agreed that 1 Maccabees is the most historically accurate. It does remind us that at this time there was not only a war against the Syrian Greeks but also a civil war going on within Israel's borders (alluded to in the second book) between Jews who wanted to assimilate with the Greek culture, and those who did not.

The passage in question from 1 Maccabees 4 can be read in its entirety in the Appendix at the end of this document. In summary, what Judas Maccabees and the brethren at that time did was to clean up the temple after it had been defiled by the Syrian Greeks and dedicate it back to Yahuweh, apparently in accordance with the teaching of Leviticus chapters 8 and 9. This was a good thing. They then ordained that a day be "kept" in order to remember the miraculous overcoming of the Syrians by the Jews. But as one writer tells it, this victorious celebration turned bad not long afterwards, and it needs to be noted as well:⁴

In time, the Maccabee family (aka Hasmoneans) became drunk with power and turned corrupt and cruel. Only 65 years after the great revolt and rededication, one of their leaders,

⁴ <http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/judaism/hanukkah.html>

Alexander Janneus (103-76 B.C.), put down a revolt by Pharisees who challenged his corruption. He ordered Jewish soldiers to crucify 800 of the Pharisees. While they were hanging alive on their crosses, he ordered the throats of their children and their wives cut in front of them (Josephus, *Antiquities* 13:14:2 [380]). The idealistic Maccabean revolt in 167-164 B.C. was destined to last a short time. A statement by the prophet Daniel may be a prophetic picture of their uprising against the Greeks. But Daniel says their effort would bring only “a little help” (Dan 11:34). A century later, the Romans swept in to become Israel’s new, worse, overlords. Eventually, the Maccabee Spirit was reborn in the persons of the Zealots, who in 66 A.D. ignited another revolt against ruling Gentiles. But this fire turned inward and became a brutal civil war in which Jews committed atrocities against Jews. It produced no liberty for anyone, and it changed the course of Jewish history forever. In 70 A.D. the Roman Tenth Legion pulled the Temple down, burned Jerusalem and slaughtered thousands. The last Zealot stronghold at Masada ended in suicide three years later. Then Jews were thrown into exile from the Land until 1948 — an exile of 1875 years.

One thing we should note from the Maccabees text is that we find no eight-day miracle of oil. Rather, various other reasons are given for the length of the holiday. It has been suggested that the eight days was celebrated because during the war with their oppressors, Israel had for several years been unable to keep Sukkoth, a biblically commanded festival normally observed by all Israel in the seventh month.⁵ Another version claims that eight spears were left behind in the temple by their oppressors, and they were used as “lampstands” while the temple was cleaned up.⁶ Regarding the oil, one writer refers to the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, stating it plainly:

Apparently it is a legend that appears in early Talmudic literature, particularly in a baraita (addition to the Mishnah) to *Megillat Ta’anit*, Shabbat 21b. According to the *Encyclopædia Judaica*, this baraita “states that on entering the Temple, the Hasmoneans discovered that the Greeks had defiled all the oil, except for one cruse, which contained enough oil to keep the candelabrum burning for only one day. A miracle, however, happened and they kindled from it for eight days; in its commemoration a festival lasting eight days was instituted for future generations”.⁷

So we have two sects of Judaism fighting with each other about whether or not to assimilate into Greek culture, and those who wish not to assimilate fighting against their oppressors. We have a cleansing of the temple and a rededicating of it to Yahuweh. But we do not have a miracle of eight days’ worth of oil coming from a single day’s portion, nor do we have an example of rededicating oneself to Yahuweh. These appear to be manmade traditions. (As a side note, it is interesting to read a discussion within the Reform Jewish community of whether this “myth” of the eight days of oil should be taught as fact to young Jews, and the possible outcome it could have in their later years, namely, that they end up believing all of what they have been taught is a lie.⁸)

The Traditions of Hanukkah

The Dreidel

One of the games played during Hanukkah involves the dreidel. During the time of Antiochus’ oppression of the Jews, it was illegal to study Torah, but it was not illegal to play gambling games with a top. So the dreidel top was invented, ostensibly as a method to study Torah. The entry from the website *Judaism 101* explains it thus:⁹

⁵ <http://www.seedofabraham.net/hanuka.html>

⁶ <http://home.earthlink.net/~bbaruch/hnhk4texts.htm>

⁷ <http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/judaism/hanukkah.html>

⁸ <http://jrf.org/showres&rid=228>

⁹ <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday7.htm>

Another tradition of the holiday is playing dreidel, a gambling game played with a square top. Most people play for matchsticks, pennies, M&Ms or chocolate coins. The traditional explanation of this game is that during the time of Antiochus' oppression, those who wanted to study [Torah](#) (an illegal activity) would conceal their activity by playing gambling games with a top (a common and legal activity) whenever an official or inspector was within sight.

A dreidel is marked with four [Hebrew letters](#): Nun, Gimel, Hei and Shin. These letters stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Hayah Sham," a great miracle happened there, referring to the miracle of the oil.

The letters also stand for the [Yiddish](#) words nit (nothing), gantz (all), halb (half) and shtell (put), which are the rules of the game! There are some variations in the way people play the game, but the way I learned it, everyone puts in one coin. A person spins the dreidel. If it lands on Nun, nothing happens; on Gimel (or, as we called it as kids, "gimme!"), you get the whole pot; on Hei, you get half of the pot; and on Shin, you put one in. When the pot is empty, everybody puts one in. Keep playing until one person has everything. Then redivide it, because nobody likes a poor winner.

Can I point to a specific scripture and say that the Bible prohibits gambling? No, I cannot. But just because I cannot point to a single scripture does not mean that there aren't principles we should examine as we answer this question. There is a good answer at www.biblestudy.org,¹⁰ which in sum says this: The principles behind gambling are idol worship and greed. And the scriptures have plenty to say about that. So I'm not sure playing dreidel is a good example that we should be setting for our children if we are concerned about teaching them principles of scripture by which to live.

The Blessings

Here is one of the traditional blessings recited by Jews and some Hebrew Roots followers every night as they light the hanukkah:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

The problem is, you will not find this commandment in Torah. It comes from the Talmud. So if a new Hebrew Roots believer were to stumble upon a web site like Hebrew for Christians (a very popular web site), they would find this blessing and then perhaps read it, thinking they are doing a good thing. But Yahuweh did not command us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah. So what are we saying when we utter these kinds of blessings? Who is it that commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah? Are we going to follow man or Yahuweh? Can you see the importance of eating from the Tree of Life and not from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

The Hanukkah

When Yahuweh gave the instruction to make the menorah, it was specific and precise. It was to be made after the pattern of heaven, and it was to be of seven branches (the entire Torah passage is found in the Appendix at the end of this document).

In the making of the seven lamps of the menorah, with the seventh lamp being fixed to the central shaft, we read: "See to it that you make them according to the design being shown you on the mountain" (Shemot/Exodus 25:40). The instruction does not say to make a shamash, a light which is higher (or in some cases, lower) than the rest of the lamps. Yet every hanukkah has this alteration from the original pattern for the menorah.

¹⁰ <http://www.biblestudy.org/question/does-bible-permit-gambling-lottery-tickets.html>

Read this along with another instruction: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Devarim/Numbers 4:2) and repeated in chapter 12, verse 32 “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”

The hanukkiah is a changing and adding to the menorah, is it not? Is this a good thing? Some may say that it’s not actually adding to the word, but it is adding to the instruction of the word, or at least changing something based on an instruction. So, do we live in the “loophole” or do we do the best we can to stay pure and true to the spirit of the law?

Below is a photograph of a representation of the menorah, found in a catacomb in Israel:



Below is archeological evidence from Herod’s Temple, sometime between 50 BC and 100 AD, of what the menorah looked like at that time (called out in red):



Below is the menorah, as it appears on the Arch of Titus, an honorific arch located on the Via Sacra in Rome and built by the Emperor Domitian to honor his brother Titus’ battle victories. On a section of it you will find this bas relief showing the menorah and the temple trumpets being carted off by the Romans when they sacked Jerusalem (~81 AD). Note the ornate base which was not part of the menorah’s original design, which was a tripod, as described by Josephus in his Wars of the Jews,¹¹ but has been suggested as having been made by the Romans to facilitate their carrying the lampstand:¹²

¹¹ “But for those that were taken in the temple of Jerusalem, they made the greatest figure of them all; that is, the golden table, of the weight of many talents; the candlestick also, that was made of gold, though its construction were now changed from that which we made use of; for its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it to a great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position, and had every one a



Below is the menorah, as it appears today as the symbol of the Knesset, the legislative branch of the Israeli civil government:



Below is the menorah in a depiction of a cohen lighting the wicks. Notice how the flame on the left branches directed to the right, and on the right branches directed toward the left, all facing the center shaft. It does not seem to be in accordance with the scripture, which states “And you shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall mount its lamps so that they give light in front of it.” (Shemot/Exodus 25:37) Arranging the lamps to the sides seems to be in violation of this, but it does show the attention that was beginning to be paid to the center lamp. Again, we see the base not constructed as Josephus said the earlier menorah was constructed, thus indicating a later construction, perhaps with Babylonian influence beginning to be apparent. This illustration is very similar to what is shown in Cart’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, published by the Temple Institute and used by some Hebrew Roots teachers.

socket made of brass for a lamp at the tops of them. These lamps were in number seven, and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews; and the last of all the spoils, was carried the Law of the Jews.” (Josephus, Wars, 7.5.5)

¹² <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/mysteries-of-the-menorah-11245>



Nowhere in any of these images do we see a hanukkiah, which looks like this:



Or like this:



Notice the center shaft is higher on the hanukkiah than it is on the menorah. This is called the shamash. There is another word in Hebrew, shemesh, which refers to the sun, that should interest us. Here is the Complete Word Study Dictionary entry on shemesh:

H8121, , שֶׁמֶשׁ, *šemeš*: A common noun meaning sun, daylight. It refers to the heavenly body, the sun: it sets, *bô'* ([Gen 15:12](#), [Gen 15:17](#); [Gen 28:11](#)); rises, *yāsa'* ([Gen 19:23](#)) ... The Israelites time and again fell into sun worship ([2Ki 23:5](#); [Jer 8:2](#); [Eze 8:16](#)), believing the sun to be a god.

To my knowledge, the word “shamash” does not appear in the Bible. The word used for servant is “ebed” (H5650) and is used over 800 times in the King James Version to describe the concept of “servant.” The word shamash is Akkadian in origin and is a cognate of the Hebrew word shemesh, which means sun. The meaning of

the word in Akkadian refers to the god of justice in the Babylonian pantheon.¹³ Also, there is a Canaanite goddess named Shapash whose name also is related to this word.¹⁴

Why is this important? It seems to me that taking a holy vessel, the construction of which was given to us in Torah, and making it into something common or profane by adding the shamash candlestick is wrong. Unfortunately, this seems to escape the notice of many in the Hebrew Roots movement. The influence of paganism on the Hebrew language is evident, and as our language goes, so does our behavior. What are we saying when we have a hanukkiah in our home?

When a Central Virginia Chabad rabbi was asked the question of whether the Hanukkah menorah was the same as the temple menorah, this answer was provided. Notice how the myth of the eight-day oil is perpetuated:¹⁵

The Hebrew word menorah means “lamp” or “candelabra.” The menorah in the Tabernacle, and later in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, was a seven-branched gold candelabra. Every day the cups of the menorah would be filled with pure olive oil, and in the afternoon, the priests would kindle the menorah.

During the period of oppression that preceded the miracle of Chanukah, the Syrian-Greeks captured the Holy Temple and disrupted the services, including the lighting of the menorah. When the Maccabees defeated the Greeks and rededicated the Holy Temple, they wanted to resume lighting of the menorah. However, the Greeks had defiled all of the oil; only one small jug of pure oil (bearing the seal of the High Priest) was found. Miraculously, the one-day supply of pure oil lasted for the eight days that it took to prepare new oil.

The menorah that we light on Chanukah (also known as a *chanukiah* in Modern Hebrew) commemorates this miracle. The design of this menorah may (but need not) be similar to the original menorah, with some important differences:

- The menorah in the Holy Temple had seven branches, while the Chanukah menorah has eight (plus one additional “helper” candle, the *shamash*.)
- The menorah in the Holy Temple was lit indoors, while the Chanukah menorah is lit outside, at the front door facing the street. (In many communities it has become customarily to light it indoors near a door or window.)
- The menorah in the Holy Temple was lit during the daytime, while we light the Chanukah menorah after sundown, to burn into the night.¹

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory, explains that there is significance to these differences. The number seven represents the natural order, as reflected in the Seven Days of Creation and the seven days of the week. Eight is a step beyond nature: the supernatural, the transcendent. The Temple was a place of holiness and revealed G-dliness, and the seven lights of the menorah were enough to light it up. Nowadays, there is more spiritual darkness in the world, and G-dliness is concealed. We need to reach beyond the limitations of nature and tap into a higher level of holiness in order to illuminate the darkness outside. The eight lights of our Chanukah menorahs, burning in the night, transform the world into a G-dly, light-filled place.² For more on this topic, see [What is the Spiritual Significance of the Number Eight?](#) and [Sunlight Pales in Comparison](#). Happy Chanukah!

FOOTNOTES

¹³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamash>

¹⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapash_\(Canaanite_goddess\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapash_(Canaanite_goddess))

¹⁵ http://www.chabadofva.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1358679/jewish/Is-MY-Menorah-The-Same-As-THE-Menorah.htm

1. Talmud Tractate Shabbos 21b; Code of Jewish Law, Orach Chaim 671.
2. Likutei Sichos, vol. 3, pp. 810-813.

So, based on this explanation, we can see that Kabbalistic numerology and Jewish tradition are involved in the hanukkah, with eight branches being considered at least by some as more “spiritual” or “holy” than the seven-branched menorah that was commanded (the actual hanukkah has nine branches, but somehow the ninth doesn’t get counted because it’s a “shamash”). While I do understand that the rabbis approved of the hanukkah because they “felt the people should not reproduce anything that was in the Temple,”¹⁶ I believe it is a liberty taken too far with the holy vessels and the spirit of the Torah. Not all will agree, and as I have brought this up it has been suggested that I am anti-Semitic. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anti-Babylon, perhaps, but never anti-Semitic. I simply believe we should err on the side of caution and not take such liberty with the pattern of heaven.

Where did this attention to Shamash or Shemesh come from? I believe it’s very old and rooted in Israel’s disobedience to Yahuweh when they first came into the land. As I said earlier, this story of Hanukkah began at the fall in the Garden. Here was the commandment: “then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and shall destroy all their engraved stones, and shall destroy all their moulded images, and lay waste all their high places, and you shall possess the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.” (Bamidbar/Numbers 33:52-53). But we didn’t do it. Consider the 19th chapter of Yehoshua/Joshua. Here’s what happened with Naphtali:

The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali for their clans. And their border was from Heleph, from the terebinth tree in Tsa’ananim, and Adami Neqeb, and Yabne’el, as far as Laqqum, and it ended at the Yarden. And the border turned westward to Aznoth Tabar, and went out from there toward Huqqoq, and reached to Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Yehudah by the Yarden toward the sunrise. And the cities of defence were Tsiddim, Tsar, and Hammath, Raqqath, and Kinnereth, and Adamah, and Ramah, and Hatsor, and Qedesh, and Edrei, and En Hatsor, and Yiron, and Migdal Eil, Horēm, and Beyth Anath, and Beyth Shemesh – nineteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali for their clans, the cities with their villages. (19:32-39)

Notice the city called “Beyth-Shemesh.” It means House of the Sun, or Temple of the Sun. It is a city which is near present-day Yerushalayim. I have provided part of the Wikipedia entry on the city in the Appendix. What is important is the megalith circle at Beit Shemesh, a structure from which the city likely derives its name, which was used as a place of sun worship.¹⁷ Originally, this city was in the territory of the tribe of Judah, and set aside for the kohanim. The priests were given a city which historically has been associated with pagan worship. Do you see the opportunity for syncretism here?

Below is a photo of the circular megalith at Beit Shemesh,¹⁸ likely used in sun worship:



¹⁶ <http://www.messianicisrael.com/news/teachings/yeshua-and-hanukkah.html>

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beit_Shemesh

¹⁸ http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological_sites_in_Israel

Below is the emblem for the contemporary city of Beth Shemesh; the Hebrew reads "Municipality of Beth Shemesh." To this day the place continues to be associated with sun worship:



In one of the longest, best-known Sumerian writings, The Great Hymn to Shamash, should be examined with regard to our subject. The writer W.G. Lambert states:¹⁹

One of the longest and most beautiful of the hymns that have come down to us in cuneiform, this ranks as one of the best products of Mesopotamian religious writing. Unlike most compositions of this kind, it seems never to have been used as an incantation and lacks the éⁿ (Incantation) at the beginning. Undoubtedly though the hymn had a liturgical role and was presumably composed with this end in view. Although Shamash, the Sun god of Babylon and Assyria, never reached the importance of His Sumerian counterpart Utu, He was always held in respect as the god of Justice, the all-seeing light from whom no one could hide.

What I could find of this hymn is listed in the Appendix. But here are some notable verses:²⁰

You, Shamash, direct, you are the light of everything ... The whole of mankind bows to you ... Shamash, the universe longs for your light ... It is pleasing to Shamash, and he will prolong his life ... You observe, Shamash, prayer, supplication, and benediction ... They in their reverence laud the mention of you ... And worship your majesty forever ... Which are the regions not warmed by the brightness of your light? ... Brightener of gloom, illuminator of darkness ... Dispeller of darkness, illuminator of the broad earth.

I believe it is of great importance that we understand the origins of our worship practices and to eschew anything that would not be pleasing to our Father. Unfortunately, human tendency is to syncretize, rather than be set apart. I understand that there has never been pure worship offered to Yahuweh, and that while we have the instructions, we are somehow unable or unwilling to follow them. Everything is mixed up, a result of leaning on our own understanding and continually ingesting the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Much of what is manmade is made because it appeals to our fleshly nature.




While candle light is beautiful, we should carefully consider what is being represented and, in essence, idolized during Hanukkah. Some will say it pertains to the relighting of the menorah in the newly consecrated temple. Some will say that the holiday has prophetic significance, and that Yeshua will be seated in the Millennial Temple on Hanukkah. That may be so. But the fact remains that the hanukkiah is mixed up with sun worship.

My purpose in detailing this information about the shamash of the hanukkiah is to show you the possible influence and origin of this particular lamp. Let us look at one final piece of information about this sun god

¹⁹ Translation by W. G. Lambert, in his book "[Babylonian Wisdom Literature](#)" (Oxford, 1960) Vol. 1, 127 ff.

²⁰ <http://www.gatewaystobabylon.com/poems/uthymn.html>

Shamash. Here is an interesting table describing some of the relationships between the names and symbols of Babylon:²¹

	BAAL	ASTARTE	TAMMUZ
Kind of god:	Father-god	Mother or Moon-goddess	Child-god/Sun god
Symbolized by:	4-pointed star or obelisk (phallus)	Crescent Moon, Uterus or 8-pointed star	Solar wheel/Eye in pyramid
			
Also known as:	Abir, Adon, Ares, Bel, Baal, Bal, Belus, Boaz, Buddh, Cernunnos, Horus, Jupiter, Knous, Kronus, Marduk, Mars, Moloch, Nebrod, Nimrod, Odin, Pan, Titan, Wodan, Zeus	Alilah, Allah, Ariadne, Astartet, Ashtoreth, Cybele, Diana, Freya, Goddess, Gaia, Gaya, Il, Isis, Ishtar, Jachin, Queen of Heaven(s), Lady Liberty, Laksjmi, (Eternal) Virgin, Moongoddess, Rhea, Sin, Venus	Ahura Mazda, Apollo, Bacchus, Cernunnos, Cupido, Dagon, Dyonisses, Hercules, Horus, Kissos, Osiris, Ninus (=Son), Helios, Hercules, Jupiter, Osiris, Pan, Shamash, Shiva, White Centaur, Son of Aethiops

Notice the implied relationship between Tammuz and Shamash. So one can perhaps see how the shamash became connected with the function of being the “servant” light to all the rest on the hanukkah. Early on, this festival was called “The Feast of Dedication,” and in fact, we see it called just that in John 10:22. But it later became called “The Festival of Lights,” and it is not difficult to see why.²²

Did Yeshua Celebrate Hanukkah?

The Feast of Dedication is mentioned in the book of Yochanan/John, and because of this I have read and heard Hebrew Roots believers state that Yeshua kept Hanukkah, so we should too. I believe this is a reading into the text (eisegesis) that illustrates the very point I’m trying to make, namely, that we often grab onto manmade traditions as we search for the way to true worship. But I believe the text gives us a clue as to what exactly He was doing there on that day. Here is the text:

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch.” (Yochanan/John 10:22-23, KJV)

We know from the Maccabees text that the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah, took place on Kislev 25, which falls sometime in late November or early December. It was winter. Some writers make note of this saying that even though it was winter, Yeshua still made it to the temple to celebrate Hanukkah. One writer states:

Yeshua’s main area or territory of ministering was one hundred miles (160 kilometers) north of Jerusalem, around the Sea of Galilee. Why would Yeshua be in Jerusalem for a non-Sabbath holiday. The only times we see Him in Jerusalem are at the Feasts of Israel ... where Yahveh commands all Israeli males to appear before Him. Why was Yeshua in Jerusalem at Hanuka time? Why would Yeshua leave the relatively warmer climate of the Sea of Galilee area for the mountainous, windy, cold and rainy city of Jerusalem in mid-December?

²¹ <http://www.sign2god.com/folders/ILL/Babylon/Babylon-exists.html>

²² For more information on the naming of this holiday, the reader is referred to the My Jewish Learning website, particularly to this page http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Hanukkah/History.shtml.

That Yeshua was there indicates that He expressly came for the Feast of Dedication. Why? Because there's no reason for Him to be in cold, windy and wet Jerusalem in the winter, other than He went there to celebrate God's mighty deliverance of the Maccabees, with other Jews. Now I realize that this is not definitive 'proof' but it is a strong indication that Hanuka was seen by Him (and all the Apostles) as 'good.' He was there to make a point. It's good to celebrate Hanuka!²³

It is human reasoning that draws the conclusion that Yeshua was in Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Dedication to celebrate it. The above paragraphs illustrate definitively the process of "reading into the text," and the writer positively admits it! There is nothing in the text to suggest the weather in Galilee vs. the weather in Jerusalem, for example, and we have no evidence of Yeshua celebrating anything! You have to read into the text to come to that conclusion, a hermeneutical method exactly opposite of how we should approach the text!

I have read a rabbinical teaching that suggests because of the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah on the 25th of Kislev, Christians chose the 25th of December as the day to remember that God brought light into the world with the birth of Jesus, and that there is something significant about this and the fact that the 25th word in Torah is "light." *Never mind that Yeshua was not born at that time!* Some say they believe he was conceived at Hanukkah the year before he was born. Is this true? Do we have any biblical example for even considering it pertinent? I believe this is yet another example of the logical potholes we can fall into when we rely on our own understanding and eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

If we look further at the context of Yochanan/John 10:22-23, we can see what was happening (the entire passage is in the Appendix). We see that He says to those who did not believe His words that they were not His sheep. We see that those who did not believe He was carrying out the Father's will desired to stone Him for blasphemy. He was not under the control of their self-assigned religious authority, so they sought to kill Him. Of course, these questions are begged: Why was Yeshua there? Who else would have been in the hearing of this message? Who was allowed in the Court of the Gentiles? What was Solomon's Porch?

It is mentioned that Yeshua "walked" in the temple in Solomon's Porch. Let's look at that verb. Here is an abbreviated entry from Arndt and Gingrich's [A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#):

περιπατέω, 1. Lit. – *go about, walk around* ... In several places one might translate *stay, spend some time, be*, though without the idea of remaining on the same spot.

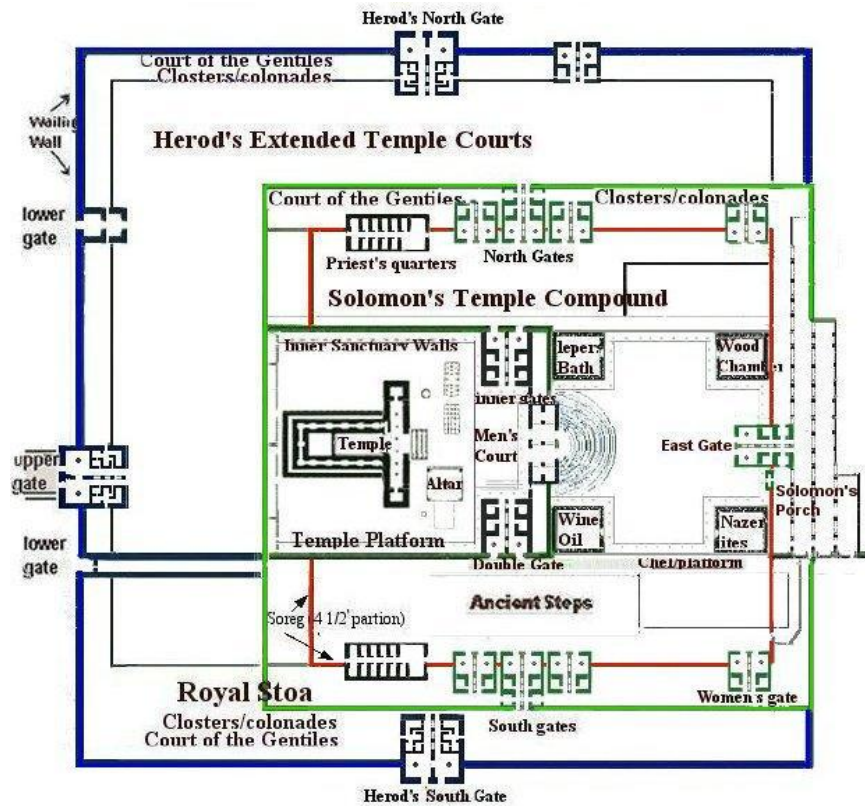
From the text, it appears that Yeshua was doing what He normally did when He went to the Temple. He was walking about, teaching. In Classical Greek,²⁴ this word carries the sense of "walking and talking" or "walking and teaching." Other uses of it in both the Brit Chadashah and the Septuagint indicate literal walking to metaphorical, halakhic walking out of our beliefs. In any case, the text does not say He was celebrating Hanukkah.

Let us consider that in scripture, we are never given information haphazardly or without purpose. Let us explore the subject of the portico of Solomon, or the porch of Solomon. First, a schematic of what one writer believes the temple compound looked like in that day (a larger version is found in the Appendix):²⁵

²³ <http://www.seedofabraham.net/hanuka.html>

²⁴ http://www.wenstrom.org/downloads/written/word_studies/greek/peripateo.pdf

²⁵ <http://templemountlocation.com/templeDiagram.html>

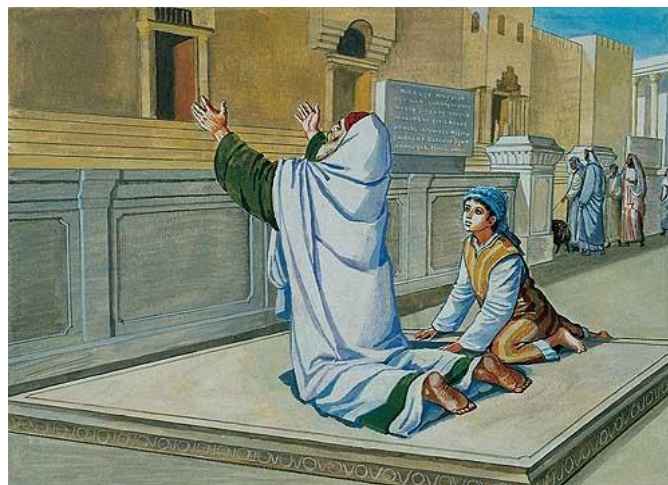


Note the soreg, the 4.5-foot high partition, colored in brown. Here is the entry on the soreg from the Jewish Encyclopedia:

The Soreg.

A reticulated fence of sticks, called "soreg," 10 handbreadths in height and at a distance of 10 cubits from the outer wall of the courts, surrounded the Temple ... The soreg served as a barrier beyond which Gentiles and the ceremonially unclean might not pass (Kelim i. 8); and it was provided with a guarded entrance opposite each gate of the courts. The exclusion of Gentiles angered the Greeks, who, when they gained control over the Jews, made thirteen openings in the soreg; but after the Maccabean victory these breaches were repaired. (Pes. 13b).²⁶

Below is an illustration of the soreg, from the Temple Institute:



²⁶ <http://www.iewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=126&letter=T#ixzz19tnAitqe>

In this sketch the soreg was not made of sticks, but of brick or stone, which I am assuming is evidence of the repair of the breaches made by the Greeks prior to the Maccabean revolt. Note to the right of the man praying, above the head of the young man, an inscription on stone. Here is the explanation for that stone:

The soreg featured signs, in a number of languages, that warned these unauthorized people against entering the area of the Holy Temple ... They decreed that anyone walking past any of these rebuilt breaches should bow down and thank G-d for His salvation. (Tractate Midot 2:3).²⁷

Here is the soreg inscription, in Greek, recorded by the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums:



Discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1871, it reads:

NO FOREIGNER
IS TO GO BEYOND THE BALUSTRADE
AND THE PLAZA OF THE TEMPLE ZONE
WHOEVER IS CAUGHT DOING SO
WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME
FOR HIS DEATH
WHICH WILL FOLLOW

So, Yeshua was in the Court of the Gentiles, in the area known as the Porch of Solomon, the eastern entrance to the Temple, where only proselytes and ceremonially unclean Jews would have been allowed. It should be noted that proselytes were still considered Gentiles, even though they were Jewish converts, and they were not allowed full access to the Temple. Nowhere in Torah do we see a mention of a need to separate out the stranger from the home born. The soreg is an invention of man, based on (dare I say it?) racial discrimination.

Let's look at the subsequent verse:

So the Yehudim surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, say to us plainly." (John 10:24, The Scriptures 1998)

²⁷ http://www.templeinstitute.org/illustrated/soreg_description.htm

So, Yeshua is in the Porch of Solomon, the entrance to the Court of the Gentiles, surrounded (some translations say “encircled”) by Jews who refused to believe He was who He said He was, in the presence of those who could not “enter in” to the activity and life of the Temple, upon pain of death. Somehow, this is not a picture of celebration to me. The Jews’ intention seems to be to keep Yeshua out of the Temple, functioning much like the physical soreg already in place. Is this the wall, this soreg, of which Rav Shaul spoke in his letter to the assembly at Ephesus? (my editorialization is parenthetical):

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off (held outside the temple, in the Court of the Gentiles) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one (both Jews and Gentiles) and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (the soreg), by abolishing in His flesh the enmity (the hatred which would put someone who passed the soreg to death), *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances (Gr. *dogma*, used to refer to the “traditions of the elders”), so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man (the beginning of the restoration of Judah and Ephraim as foretold in Yehezqel/Ezekiel 37:16), *thus* establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body (the bride) to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity (the hatred between brothers). AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 57:18-19); for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephsiyim/Ephesians 2:13-18, NASB)

Yes, Yeshua was at the temple during the Feast of Dedication. Yes, He was in the Porch of Solomon, the entryway into the Court of the Gentiles, entering in by East Gate as He will enter into the Millennial Temple when He comes again to sit and rule. Perhaps, it seems, He may have been there walking and teaching, as was his way. Yes, He told the Pharisees that they were not of His flock, because they would not believe His message. But no, He was not there to celebrate the Feast of Dedication. The text does not support that. Why did He go that at that time? What was His purpose?

I believe His purpose was to make plain to anyone who would listen that He was Messiah, our Good Shepherd, the one who will lead us home. That He is one (not numerically, as so many mistake, but in unity of mind and spirit) with the Father. That He has come to give us eternal life, and no one can pluck us from His hand. Is this a message the Gentiles needed to hear? Yes. Our Father’s plan has always been to bring home the lost sheep of the House of Israel, as well as the strangers who would join themselves to Israel in the covenant. This is not a message that the religious Jews wanted to hear. It burned their ears to hear it, and they even accused Yeshua of having a demon, or being mad. That He was so bold to come into the court with this message during one of their celebrations, well, it was just too much for them. They sought to kill Him. And eventually they succeeded.

Hanukkah has always been, and will always be, a celebration based on a moment in history when the Jews overthrew the Gentiles because of a clash over faith and culture. Jews have been persecuted throughout history. But unfortunately, they also have been the perpetrators of persecution. Judah Maccabee was no shepherd to his people, as Yeshua is a shepherd to His, though many lifted up Judah Maccabee as a type of Messiah. The spirit which led that revolt only turned into civil war that eventually led to the destruction of the Temple. The message behind Hanukkah is contrary to the message of Yeshua, which is one of uniting all the people of Yahuweh, not creating class distinctions based on physical ancestry and custom. We should question whether we should participate in something that, in effect, is an acknowledgement – indeed, a celebration – of the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. Many of us understand that there are pagan roots to beloved customs of the Christian faith; it is also important for us to see those same roots in the traditions of Judaism, which Yeshua corrected over and again.

We must consider carefully and with great study, as the Bereans before us, what parts of man’s traditions are acceptable to Yahuweh and which should be avoided. We also must be very careful to consider the implications

of our following such traditions, and especially the impact they have on the generation coming behind us. It is my hope that the reader will be prompted to further investigate any customs and practices they have picked up along the way, measure them against the rod of the Torah, to determine whether they truly are following Torah or whether they are being drawn into another of man's many religions.

APPENDIX NOTES

1 Maccabees 4:36-59

Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary. Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into mount Sion. And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down; They rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads, And fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven. Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place. And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them. Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make. Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu (Kislev), in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals. Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success. And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. They decked also the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold, and with shields; and the gates and the chambers they renewed, and hanged doors upon them. Thus was there very great gladness among the people, for that the reproach of the heathen was put away. Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.

Shemot/Exodus 25:31-40

"You are to make a menorah of pure gold. It is to be made of hammered work; its base, shaft, cups, ring of outer leaves and petals are to be of one piece with it. It is to have **six** branches extending from its sides, **three** branches of the menorah on one side of it and **three** on the other. On one branch are to be three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a ring of outer leaves and petals; likewise on the opposite branch three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a ring of outer leaves and petals; and similarly for all six branches extending from the menorah. On the central shaft of the menorah are to be four cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with its ring of outer leaves and petals. Where each pair of branches joins the central shaft is to be a ring of outer leaves of one piece with the pair of branches — thus for all six branches. The rings of outer leaves and their branches are to be of one piece with the shaft. Thus the whole menorah is to be a single piece of hammered work made of pure gold. Make **seven** lamps for the menorah, and mount them so as to give light to the space in front of it. Its tongs and trays are to be of pure gold. The menorah and its utensils are to be made of sixty-six pounds of pure gold. See that you make them according to the design being shown you on the mountain.

Wikipedia Entry on Beit Shemesh

(Note, if you use the CTRL key and click on the links, the subject will open up for further exploration in Wikipedia).

Antiquity

The ancient city of Beit Shemesh ("house of the sun" or "temple of the sun" in Hebrew) was originally named after the [Canaanite](#) sun-goddess [Shemesh](#), which was worshipped there in antiquity. The ruins of the ancient biblical city can still be seen in the [tell](#) of Beit Shemesh, located near the modern city.

Several important and unique archaeological discoveries have been made in recent digs at the tel. The most ancient [iron workshop](#) in the world was discovered here in 2003. The only remnants of a [fortified city](#) with an advanced water system, from the time of the early [Kingdom of Judah](#) was found here. In all layers from this period, the bones of animals were all of [kosher](#) animals, in contrast to nearby ancient fortresses and settlements of that period such as [Maresha](#), [Azeka](#) or [Lachish](#), suggesting an early [Jewish settlement](#) and advanced kingdom in the [early biblical "kings" period](#).

During the destruction of Judea by the [Babylonians](#), the waterworks of Beit Shemesh were sealed and covered, and were not uncovered until 2004. Thus during the first Jewish return, known as the [Second Temple](#) period, there was no revival of the city, as opposed to many other places in the vicinity such as [Beit Guvrin](#), [Maresha](#), and others. Consequently, the small towns of Dayr Raban and Dayr Rafat had used secondary rocks for building, from this very ancient source. Also found nearby is a prehistoric [Megalith](#) circle, probably the structure responsible for the name Beit Shemesh.

Biblical references

Beit Shemesh is first mentioned in the [Book of Joshua](#) 15 as a city in the territory of the [tribe of Judah](#) on the border between their territory and that of the [tribe of Dan](#). Later in Joshua 21 Beit Shemesh is mentioned as having been set aside a city for the priests of the [tribe of Levi](#), the [Kohanim](#). The city is mentioned notably in chapter 6 of the book of [Samuel I](#) as being the first city encountered by the [ark of the covenant](#) on its way back from [Philistia](#) after having been [captured](#) by the [Philistines](#) in battle. In the book of [Kings II](#), Beit Shemesh is again mentioned as being the site of the battle between [Amaziah](#) king of [Judea](#) and [Jehoash](#) king of [Israel](#).

A Portion of the Great Hymn to Shamash

21. You climb to the mountains surveying the earth,
22. You suspend from the heavens the circle of the lands.
23. You care for all the peoples of the lands,
24. And everything that Ea, king of the counsellors, had created is entrusted to you.
25. Whatever has breath you shepherd without exception,
26. You are their keeper in upper and lower regions.
27. Regularly and without cease you traverse the heavens,
28. Every day you pass over the broad earth. . . .
33. Shepherd of that beneath, keeper of that above,
34. You, Shamash, direct, you are the light of everything.
35. You never fail to cross the wide expanse of sea,
36. The depth of which the Igigi know not.
37. Shamash, your glare reaches down to the abyss
38. So that monsters of the deep behold your light. . . .
45. Among all the Igigi there is none who toils but you,
46. None who is supreme like you in the whole pantheon of gods.
47. At your rising the gods of the land assemble,
48. Your fierce glare covers the land.
49. Of all the lands of varied speech,
- 50.. You know their plans, you scan their way.
- 51.. The whole of mankind bows to you,

52. Shamash, the universe longs for your light. . . .
88. A man who covets his neighbour's wife
89. Will [. . .] before his appointed day.
- 90.. A -nasty snare is prepared for him. [. . .]
91. Your weapon will strike at him, and there will be none to save him.
92. [His] father will not stand for his defense,
93. And at the judge's command his brothers will not plead.
94. He will be caught in a copper trap that he did not foresee.
95. You destroy the horns of a scheming villain,
96. A zealous [. . .] his foundations are undermined.
97. You give the unscrupulous judge experience of fetters,
98. Him who accepts a present and yet lets justice miscarry you make bear his punishment.
99. As for him who declines a present but nevertheless takes the part of the weak,
100. It is pleasing to Shamash, and he will prolong his life. . . .
124. The progeny of evil-doers will [fail.]
125. Those whose mouth says 'No'-their case is before you.
126. In a moment you discern what they say;
127. You hear and examine them; you determine the lawsuit of the wronged.
128. Every single person is entrusted to your hands;
129. You manage their omens; that which is perplexing you make plain.
130. You observe, Shamash, prayer, supplication, and benediction,
131. Obeisance, kneeling, ritual murmurs, and prostration.
132. The feeble man calls you from the hollow of his mouth,
133. The humble, the weak, the afflicted, the poor,
134. She whose son is captive constantly and unceasingly confronts you.
135. He whose family is remote, whose city is distant,
136. The shepherd [amid] the terror of the steppe confronts you,
137. The herdsman in warfare, the keeper of sheep among enemies.
138. Shamash, there confronts you the caravan, those journeying in fear,
139. The travelling merchant, the agent who is carrying capital.
140. Shamash, there confronts you the fisherman with his net,
141. The hunter, the Bowman who drives the game,
142. With his bird net the Fowler confronts You.
143. The prowling thief, the enemy of Shamash,
144. The marauder along the tracks of the steppe confronts you.
145. The roving dead, the vagrant soul,
146. They confront you, Shamash, and you hear all.
147. You do not obstruct those that confront you. . . .
148. For my sake, Shamash, do not curse them!
149. You grant revelations, Shamash, to the families of men,
150. Your harsh face and fierce light you give to them. . . .
154. The heavens are not enough as the vessel into which you gaze,
155. The sum of the lands is inadequate as a seer's bowl.....
159. You deliver people surrounded by mighty waves,
160. In return you receive their pure, clear libations. . . .
165. They in their reverence laud the mention of you,
166. And worship your majesty for ever. . . .
174. Which are the mountains not clothed with your beams?
175. Which are the regions not warmed by the brightness of your light?
176. Brightener of gloom, illuminator of darkness,
177. Dispeller of darkness, illuminator of the broad earth.

Yochanan/John 10:24-42

“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, **I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.** Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, **Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?** The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.** Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.”

