

Happy Hanukkah!

Prophecy student and teacher T.W. Tramm posted this study of the Hebrew holiday of Hanukkah, and it is worth sharing with all of you as we approach the day observed as Christmas. It offers comforting words to those looking for the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ and I forward it on to you as a reason to hang tough in a world that is clearly in the throes of the impending Antichrist System.

WITH THE SIGNS of Jesus' return all around, virtually every month and festival are considered a potential rapture time.

Here are some correlations that have watchmen looking up during the month of Kislev–December:

THE NINTH MONTH

Kislev is the ninth month on God's calendar. According to E.W. Bullinger, the number nine, the last of the digits, signifies the conclusion of a matter. Furthermore, as a sum of the factors of the number six, the number nine is significant of the end of man, or the summation of man's works, and thus the number of finality or judgment.

'MIDNIGHT' OF THE YEAR

Dividing the circle of the year into halves at the spring and fall equinoxes, the winter solstice during Kislev marks the halfway point, or 'midnight,' of the dark half, or nighttime portion, of the year. This is noteworthy because, prophetically, midnight is when the bridegroom comes to gather the virgins to the wedding: "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'" (Matt. 25:6).

'THIRD WATCH' OF THE YEAR


Dividing the circle of the year into four 'watches' at the equinoxes and solstices, the winter solstice during Kislev marks the end of the third watch. In Luke, Jesus warns that He may come during the third watch: "And if he shall come in ... the third watch, and find them so [watching], blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:38 KJV).

HANUKKAH

Kislev is the month of Hanukkah, also called the festival of dedication (John 10:22). Hanukkah commemorates the Jewish recapture and rededication of the Temple from the Greek army after it was defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes, a type of the end-times Antichrist.

The central theme of Hanukkah is that, despite Satan's relentless efforts to defile the Temple, which ultimately represents the Body of Christ, or Church (1 Cor. 3), it will be purified and dedicated to the Lord, as a spotless bride to her husband (2 Cor. 11:12; Eph. 5:25–27).

A SECOND FEAST OF TABERNACLES

In the 2nd Book of Maccabees, we learn that Hanukkah, the festival that commemorates the rededication of the Temple, is patterned after the original festival of dedication, the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Macc. 1:9, 18; 1 Kings .

Since Hanukkah is essentially a delayed observance of Tabernacles, some Hasidic scholars teach that it in fact marks the final conclusion of the High Holy days, the period of judgment and “sealing” associated with Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur.

RECLAIMING JERUSALEM

Seeing that a fundamental theme of Hanukkah is reclaiming Jerusalem from a foreign power, it is significant that historical events corresponding to this theme have occurred around Hanukkah:

- On Kislev 24 (Hanukkah Eve), 1917, British forces liberated Jerusalem from centuries of Muslim–Turkish rule. The liberation of Jerusalem from the Muslims was the first major step in returning the Holy City to the Jews.
- On Kislev 16, 1947, the UN voted in favor of the creation of an independent Jewish state in the Land of Israel.
- On Kislev 28, 1947, the British Government declared that they would relinquish control of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people at midnight on May 14, 1948.
- On Kislev 19, 2017, Donald Trump declared Jerusalem to be Israel’s capital, making him the first US President—and the first foreign leader in modern history—to recognize the Holy City as the capital of Israel.

Prophetically, it is a return to Jerusalem that initiates the countdown of Sabbatical “weeks” to Messiah the prince (Dan. 9:25).

JESUS AT THE GATHERING PLACE OF THE CHURCH

In John chapter 10, Jesus is found at the Temple area called Solomon’s porch on Hanukkah (vv. 22, 23). Solomon’s porch was a place of assembly for the early Church, and is believed to be the location of the gathering of the saints on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 2; 5:12).

SPIRITUAL HARVEST

In John chapter 4, it is during Kislev, when spring is yet four months away, that Jesus surveys the ‘spiritual field,’ or ‘field of humanity,’ and deems it ripe for harvest: “You have a saying, ‘Four more months and then the harvest.’ But I tell you, take a good look at the fields; the crops are now ripe and ready to be harvested!” (John 4:35).

ENOCH

The name Enoch means “dedicated or consecrated” and is derived from the same Hebrew root, Hanokh, used for the word Hanukkah. This is significant because in the

Bible, Enoch is supernaturally taken up, or ‘raptured,’ to be with God, like the Church will be. Furthermore, Enoch’s ‘rapture’ occurred when he was 365 years old, the same number of days in a Gregorian year, which ends around Hanukkah (Gen. 5:23, 24).

A DAY OF JUDGMENT

It was on Kislev 24, the date that would later become Hanukkah Eve, that God gave Haggai a prophecy about a great shaking at the end of the age:

“The word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying ... I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will [in the distant future] overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the [ungodly] nations” (Hagg. 2:20–22; Heb. 12:26).

Interestingly, some Bible translations use the Gregorian date, December 18, instead of Kislev 24 for the year in which the prophecy was given:

“On ... December 18, the Lord sent this second message to Haggai: ... ‘I am about to shake the heavens and the earth...’” (Hagg. 2:20, 21 NLT).

“The word of the Lord came to Haggai on ... (Dec 18, 520 b.c.), saying ‘I am about to shake the heavens and the earth...’” (Hagg. 2:20, 21 Amplified Bible).

Due to the different reckonings of the biblical and Gregorian calendars, it is rare that Kislev 24 corresponds to December 18. However, in the 35-year span between 2015 and 2050, there is one year in which Hanukkah lands on December 18—that is 2022!

A SEASON OF SHOPPING AND FESTIVITIES

Kislev, the month of Hanukkah and Christmas, is prime time for shopping and festivities around the world. This is significant because Jesus specifies that people will be “eating, drinking, buying and selling,” when Judgment Day arrives (Luke 17:27, 28). Furthermore, Scripture says people will be “planting” and “marrying.” Kislev–December is when wheat and barley are planted in Israel. The winter month is also considered by Jews to be an auspicious time for weddings.

In summary, Kislev–Hanukkah represent:

- A time of finality or conclusion.
- “Midnight” of the year.
- The “third watch” of the year.
- A time of cleansing and dedicating the Temple.
- A delayed Feast of Tabernacles.
- A time of reclaiming Jerusalem.
- A time when Jesus is at the Temple.
- A time of spiritual harvest.
- A time of judgment.
- A time of buying, selling, eating drinking, planting, and marrying.

With the above correlations in view, some believe that a future Kislev–Hanukkah could see events related to Jesus’ return. Some even speculate that the Rapture could occur during Kislev, thus fulfilling the Scriptures that allude to a tarrying of the bridegroom (Matt. 25).

Despite my own rapture-season leanings, I do not dismiss the possibility of a Kislev Rapture for one simple reason: Scripture implies that the catching away of the Church could happen at an unexpected time. Speaking to His closest followers, those actively watching for His return, Jesus warns:

“Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also [watchman] must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matt. 24:42–44).

Whether the Lord is referring only to not knowing the literal day and hour or also the month and season is unknown. Either way, the warning seems intended to curb expectations around anticipated dates or times, which can lead to disheartenment and a mistaken assumption that He is “staying away a long time” (Matt. 24:48–50).

What Scripture does encourage the believer to do is to count the years from the leafing of the fig tree and the return to Jerusalem to determine the general timeframe of Jesus’ coming (Matt. 24:32–34; Dan. 9:25).

A straightforward reckoning of these timelines suggests that we are at the beginning of the final seven-year Sabbatical period, the one that will see the Tribulation events come to pass.

Since the Rapture precedes the Tribulation, it is correct to say that we are in the season of the Rapture. However, no one knows the day, not even the angels (Matt. 24:36). So keep your wedding lamp lit, not only during Hanukkah but every day!

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NOTES:

1. Hanukkah (general):

<https://www.chabad.org/.../jewish/What-Is-Hanukkah.htm>

2. Haggai chapter 2 implies that Kislev 24 is when the foundation of the Temple was laid. It is believed that this day was kept as a day of gathering in the Temple, commemorating its foundation, which is why the Greeks chose it as a day of defilement, and why the Jews chose it as a day of dedication.

<https://www.thetorah.com/.../the-biblical-building-blocks...>

3. Hanukkah as a second Feast of Tabernacles:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Maccabees+10:6&version=nrsvce>

<https://www.thetorah.com/.../the-biblical-building-blocks...>

4. That Hanukkah is patterned after Tabernacles explains why the Hallel (Ps. 113–118), originally sung only at Tabernacles, is still sung in synagogue Hanukkah services today.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Maccabees+10:6&version=nrsvce>

5. Final judgment on Hanukkah:
<https://aish.com/final-judgment-on-chanukah/>

6. Solomon's porch and the gathering of the saints on Pentecost:
<https://hoshanarabbah.org/blog/2018/03/29/solomons-porch/>
<https://torahportions.ffoz.org/.../pentecost-solomons...>

7. Enoch etymology: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/enoch>

8. Hanukkah weddings: <https://www.chabad.org/.../Approved-Dates-for-a-Wedding.htm>

9. Sabbatical cycle reckonings:
<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm>
<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/.../sabbatical-years...>
<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/.../sabbatical-years...>
<https://biblearchaeology.org/.../4590-the-going-forth-of...>

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Blessings, Happy Hanukkah & A Merry Christmas

I know what I want for this day,

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